TAIN JOHN BROWN

HARPER'S FERRY

JOHN NEWTON

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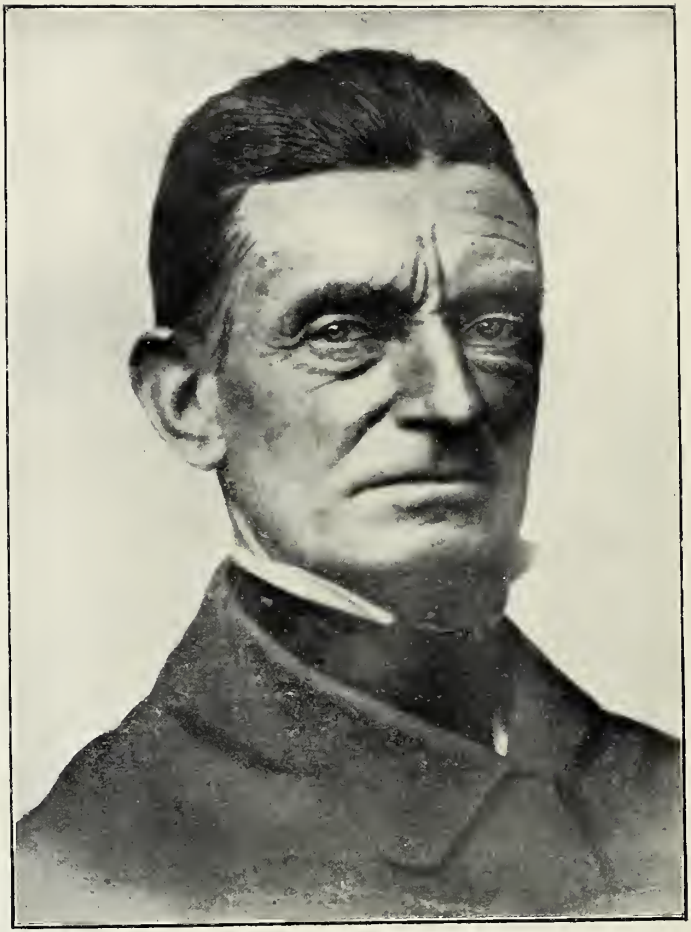
CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN



JOHN BROWN OF HARPER'S FERRY.

Frontispiece.

CAPTAIN JOHN BROWN

OF

HARPER'S FERRY

A Preliminary Incident to the Great Civil War of America

By

JOHN NEWTON

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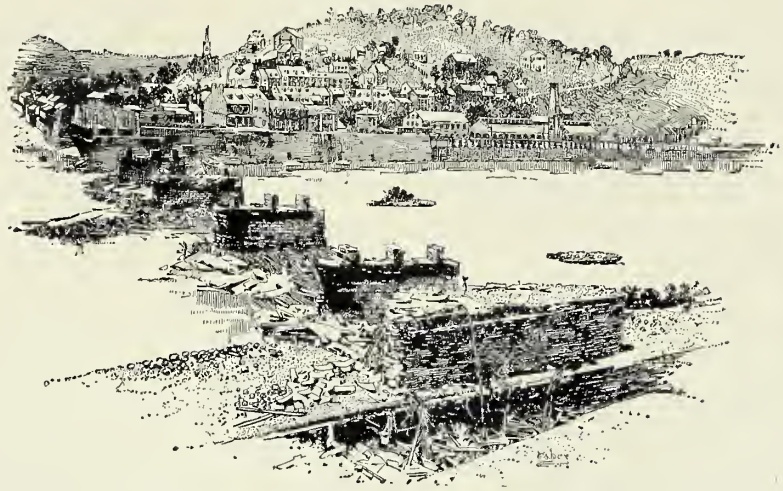
1902



HARPER'S FERRY, FROM THE MARYLAND SIDE.

To face Chapter I., page 1.

PREFACE

THIS little book—the product of the scanty leisure of five years—does not profess to be written in the spirit of cold, rigid impartiality. It expresses the point of view of a frank admirer of John Brown's character and career. At the same time it contains no conscious evasion of difficulties, nor perversion of detrimental facts. Every care has been taken to arrive at the exact facts on disputed points, and to state those facts clearly. As far as the writer knows, nothing but the truth is told, but it is "the truth told lovingly."

So that the text may not be burdened by numerous footnotes, I desire to express here my obligations to the following writers. For part of Chapter I. I am indebted to Mr Ascott R. Hope, whose *Heroes in Homespun* furnishes many interesting particulars of the Anti-Slavery struggle in a convenient form.

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The earliest life of Brown issued in England was Richard D. Webb's *Life and Letters*, published in 1862, from which I have quoted freely, as also from Redpath's *Life*, the first written in America. Indeed, these two writers have supplied me with the bulk of the material used in this book. Since these were issued, important information has come to light not available at so early a date, and much of this is to be found in F. B. Sanborn's *Life and Letters of John Brown, Liberator of Kansas.* Written by an old and confidential friend of Brown's, this voluminous work may be considered the final and authoritative life from the point of view of an intimate personal study, and all future writers will be under a debt of obligation to it. It contains a number of letters not to be found elsewhere, and I quote two on pp. 43 and 45. My obligations on other points are expressed in the body of the work.

Fuller particulars of Brown's companions are supplied in R. J. Hinton's *John Brown and his Men*, issued in 1894, the last *Life* published in America. In addition to the references in the body of the book, I desire here to express my indebtedness to this *Life* for some material used

in the last chapter, and particularly for information on the history of Brown's family subsequent to his death. This work is also by a personal friend, one who took part in the struggle in Kansas.

The scheme of neither writer permitted him to set Brown's career in any proper perspective to the moral and political movements of the time, a task I have attempted in the present volume.

For an understanding of the general political policy of the times, Nicolay and Hay's *Life of Lincoln* is indispensable, and to them, as also to Dr John Fiske's *History of the United States*, I am largely indebted for the material used in Chapter II.

Quotations from and references to Brown, in the lives and works of Emerson, Thoreau, Whittier, Channing, Wendell Phillips, Douglass, etc., are too scattered and fragmentary to need detailed notice. But they furnish interesting side-lights on Brown's influence upon thinkers, and enable us to realise the view taken of his character and work by some of his most distinguished contemporaries.

In conclusion, the writer cannot help expressing his feeling of the immense distance which separates the picture here attempted from the conception in his

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own mind of what is necessary to an adequate and worthy presentation of a noble career. Such as it is, he offers it to all sympathetic readers, who, in an age tainted with selfishness and greed, still preserve a love of all heroic endeavour and unselfish sacrifice in the "service of humanity."

JOHN NEWTON.

PLYMOUTH,
1st January 1902.

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Captain John Brown

CHAPTER I

WHAT WAS SLAVERY?

IT is very difficult for the generation which has grown up since the great Civil War of America to realise the awful horrors of that system of domestic slavery which so long stained the fair fame of the United States, and brought untold suffering upon millions of human beings whose only fault was that they had negro blood in their veins. And *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which concentrates rather than exaggerates the peculiar evils of the system, is not so much read as formerly. The book which thrilled the hearts of the fathers is neglected by the sons.

As it was a deep, overwhelming sense of the iniquity and crime of slavery which decided the course of John Brown's life, it is necessary, before considering in detail his eventful career, to give some brief account of the system against which he waged a life-long war.

It may fairly be said that in no age of the world

has there existed a form of slavery so essentially evil in its nature, so brutalising to the master, and so degrading and full of agony to the slave, as that which existed in the Southern States of the American Union. By the Spaniards and Portuguese the slave was treated something like a man and a Christian. He could purchase his freedom at a rate fixed by law. He was allowed a specified number of hours each week in which to work for himself. By this means an industrious slave could gradually accumulate enough money to set himself at liberty. A slave mother could purchase her child's freedom at the baptismal font. The slave had a legal status as a human being, possessing rights and privileges. But in the States he had none of these things. He was merely part of his owner's goods and chattels. A thing his master could use as his fancy or brutality dictated, and from whose decision there was no appeal. A slave's voice and word, or those of a score of his fellows, were as nothing against the lightest word of his owner. A judge upon the bench laid it down that, "The slave, to remain a slave, must be made sensible that there is no appeal from his master; that the master's power is in no instance usurped, but is conferred by the law of man, at least, if not by the law of God." No scale of purchase was fixed by law, neither had he the right to buy his freedom. It was left to the caprice of each individual owner to fix a reasonable or prohibitive price, or to refuse to sell at all, as the humour of the moment prompted him. Indeed, in most of the States manumission was steadily discouraged. Public opinion emphatic-

ally condemned it. And in at least one instance —Alabama — it was made illegal for any owner either to give or sell freedom to his slaves. Freed slaves were not allowed to settle in some States, and in others it was a punishable offence to teach them to read or write.

As the soil of the older States—such as Virginia and Maryland—became exhausted by the wasteful methods of cultivation obtaining where slave labour was employed, the cotton-planters adopted a horrible system of breeding slaves for the Southern market, where healthy hands were in great demand and would fetch a good price. As the demand increased the prices steadily rose until a healthy male field hand, who was worth 250 dollars in 1790, sold for 1600 dollars in 1860. Husbands and wives, parents and children, were ruthlessly separated and sent hundreds of miles apart, as though they had been animals. The scenes regularly occurring at public auctions are on the one hand almost too harrowing to contemplate, and on the other too disgusting to describe. And, to crown all, ministers of the Gospel so far forgot the spirit of the Master they professed to serve as to preach in support of the system, and grossly distorted Scripture to make it lend its sanction to the institution of slavery.

On the other hand, there were few redeeming features. They cannot be said to brighten the picture. They barely render it a few shades less sombre. Here and there was to be found a slave-owner who was kind and considerate to his

slaves; but there was no certainty of continuance. Death, business loss or gambling debts put an end to the comparative happiness of hundreds of families, who by the auctioneer's hammer were scattered far and wide, never to meet again. In the most favourable circumstances the sword hung threateningly over them, and none knew how soon it might fall.

A few details of an ex-slave's experiences will place the evils of the system in bold relief. John Little's story is typical of thousands more. There is no reason to believe that his history is more painful than that of the average slave. Indeed, in its close it is brighter than most, for he won the freedom thousands pined for but never obtained, and hundreds strove for but failed to secure. He was born of slave parents in North Carolina and spent his youth in comparative happiness. That is to say, he was not ill-used, had food, coarse but plenty, and shelter, and his work was comparatively easy, tending mules and hogs. But he was taught nothing, not even the alphabet, neither was he allowed to go to church. When little over twenty he was sold at a public auction to pay a debt of his master's. His mother was deeply concerned lest he should be sold "South," a name full of terrors to all slaves, reeking with all conceivable horrors of torture and suffering. Luckily, as they thought, he was bought by a trader in the neighbourhood, styled "Mr E.," who had the reputation of being a famous "negro-breaker." It was not long before Little had a taste of his quality. He found

himself one of a gang of seventy men, women and children who were kept steadily at work from early morning till late at night, with no interval for rest or food except when the horses had to be fed. On the first Saturday evening Little asked for permission to visit his mother on the Sunday. It was savagely refused. "I don't allow my niggers to run about on Sundays." John went, nevertheless, returning after dark. His punishment was awful. Monday morning saw him tied to a tree and condemned to receive five hundred lashes with a thick bull-hide whip on his bare back. "I wanted to see my mother very bad," he pleaded, as his owner marked out with his cane where the blows were to fall, and then stood by to count them, whilst the blood spurted from the poor slave's lacerated flesh. One hundred fell without a pause, and in the interval he was treated to a torrent of abuse from his master. "I meant no harm," he pleaded, "I only wanted to go and see my mother." For reply he received two cuts on the head from his master's cane, and the flogging began again. Faint with loss of blood and the intensity of his suffering, Little was unable to count how many blows followed before he was taken down and his wounds washed *with salt and water*. Then his feet were put in irons, his legs in stocks, and he was compelled to lie the long night through on his back, unable to turn to ease the excruciating agony. Next morning he was ordered fifty blows with the "paddle," but at the third stroke he fainted outright. On recovering he was sent into the fields to work all day in the

burning sun. For three months he worked in fetters, his spirit still unbroken and Reason on her throne. Said he: "I made up my mind that if he would find whips I would find back." His dogged spirit at length wore out the brutality of his owner, who sent him to Norfolk, at the entrance to Chesapeake Bay, to be shipped for New Orleans.

Whilst waiting for a vessel, Little escaped from the prison in which he was confined and travelled in the direction of his mother's cabin. He knew nothing then of the "Underground Railway," by means of which, from first to last, kind-hearted friends helped thousands of slaves to liberty.* He knew nothing of the Free States where there was no slavery, neither had he heard of Canada, where all men were equal before the law. He was facing the world with his life in his hand, not knowing that he had a single friend in it able to help him. For two years he lived the life of a hunted animal in the woods, stealing the white man's pigs and chickens whenever opportunity served. A reward of fifty dollars was offered for his capture, and at last his haunts were disclosed by a treacherous negro. Six young men undertook the chase of the runaway nigger, much as they would a troublesome tiger or bear. They came upon him while asleep, and as he ran one of the youths shot him in the leg. After a term of imprisonment he was sold into Tennessee. For two years he was fairly happy, and then married, only to be sold away from his wife at

* Various estimates are given from 20,000 to double that number.

the end of twelve months. Again he ran away, was caught and placed in gaol. Here he found another slave also undergoing imprisonment for running away to see his wife. Between them they broke through the roof one night, but were discovered. Little's companion drew back afraid, but he succeeded in getting away. He crossed a creek, thus breaking the scent of the blood-hounds that were after him, and crawling on with his legs wide apart to prevent the clanking of his chains, drew slowly away from his pursuers. At dawn he found a blacksmith's shop and set his feet at liberty. Borrowing a horse from a neighbouring stable, he rode away to Jackson, where his wife was. Her master bought him "running" for a nominal sum, and Little at once gave himself up, as his only desire was to be with his wife. All went well until he spoke to a fellow-slave when at work. For this offence he was ordered three hundred strokes with a "paddle." Rather than suffer this he again ran away, waiting in the neighbourhood for his wife and another slave who had agreed to go with him. They were both suspected and soundly flogged to make them disclose his whereabouts, as was also a sickly boy, but all sturdily refused to tell. The slave was put in irons, but Little's wife succeeded in joining him in the woods. Wiser now than before, they turned their faces towards the north, where were freedom and rest for the slave. Guided only by the north star, without any idea of the distance they had to traverse, sleeping one at a time whilst the other kept watch, travelling only by night and hiding by day, feeding

chiefly on roots and berries, they succeeded at last in reaching Illinois, where an escaped slave gave them some welcome directions, and they finally reached Chicago in safety, after many long weeks of exposure and hardship. In Canada, Little secured a grant of land in the backwoods, and after fourteen years of freedom had one hundred acres cleared and under cultivation, and boasted, with pardonable pride, "I can lend or borrow two thousand dollars any time I am asked."

A taint of negro blood, even two generations removed, was sufficient to make a man a slave, though his skin was as white as his owner's. A case is recorded of a man who grew up ignorant of the taint in his blood, married and had a family, and became deacon of his church. Yet, on the death of his father and owner, he was dragged from the bedside of the sick wife he was nursing and sold into the South. Escaping some months later, he returned home to find his wife dead, his home broken up and his children scattered. He died in a few months broken-hearted. All this he suffered at the hands of his half-brother, who pocketed his thousand dollars at the cost of two lives, a desolated home and the untold sufferings of little innocent children.

The history of Lewis Clarke—said to be the original of George Harris in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*—is almost equally painful. With a white skin, the son and grandson of white men, he was yet a slave because his mother had negro blood in her veins. At seven years of age he was dragged from his mother's side by her half-sister, Mrs Bainton, and

sent naked to work in the garden all day so that the sun might "burn him black." Set to spin hemp and flax by her side from early morning till late at night, if the poor child's eyes drooped from sheer weariness, his unnatural relative threw vinegar and salt into them, which she kept ready to hand in a basin. Cuffs, kicks, strappings, liftings up by the hair of his head were his daily portion. Her husband was a fit mate for such a human fiend. He was known to have heated red hot a number of nails and cooled them one by one on a slave's flesh. At sixteen Clarke was sold to a less brutal master, and a few years afterwards, aided, doubtless, by his white skin, effected an easy escape. Later in life he became a lecturer for the Abolition Society, and by the story of his sufferings won many adherents to the good cause.

Such, in brief outline, was slavery: blessed by "traitors to humanity" in the guise of clergymen, who prostituted a noble office to the basest of purposes: hated by simple Puritans of the type of John Brown as a crime against God and man.

CHAPTER II

THE STATE AND SLAVERY

When the thirteen States of North America issued their Declaration of Independence, on 4th July 1776, slave-holding was practised in each of them and was recognised by law. But gradually, almost imperceptibly, natural causes, aided by moral enlightenment, operated against its continuance in the Northern States. Slave labour was not so profitable as free labour in the Temperate Zone, and the stream of emigration which promptly set in from Europe supplied labour both abundant and cheap, and the Northerners gradually sold their slaves to the Southern planters. Once their hands were freed from complicity, the scales fell from their eyes, and they came to regard what they had but recently practised themselves as a very offensive system. Time deepened this feeling of disfavour into one of hatred and abhorrence.

Within a dozen years these feelings found expression in legislation, and by the Ordinance of 1787 the whole of the North-West Territory was declared free ground, on which it was illegal to hold slaves. Nevertheless, some slavery continued to exist in a modified form. In 1807 Indiana passed a law sanctioning a form of slavery by indenture, and when Illinois was cut

off from this vast territory and organised as a separate State, the Act continued within its borders. Under a plea of lack of labour to work the cotton mills, a law was enacted in 1814 to provide for the hiring of slaves from the Southern States, but the falsity of the plea was exposed by a provision prohibiting free negroes from settling in the territory. The proximity of Missouri, where slavery was in existence, led to a demand for the repeal of the anti-slave law, but when the poll was taken the law was sustained by a large majority and Illinois remained free.

With each admission of a new State to the Union the question had to be fought out whether it should be slave or free, and the representatives of the two interests in each branch of the supreme Legislature were influenced in their votes for or against admission by the applicant's attitude on this one question. As each State sent the same number of men to the Senate at Washington, where the parties were fairly evenly divided, it became a struggle for supremacy, and men were elated or depressed according to the swing of the pendulum for or against their views. From the Ordinance of 1787 to the Missouri Compromise of 1820 the admissions of Slave and Free States alternated with fair regularity, as the following list will show:—Vermont was admitted to the Union in 1791, Free; Kentucky in 1792, Slave; Tennessee in 1796, Slave; Ohio in 1802, Free; Louisiana in 1812, Slave; Indiana in 1816, Free; Mississippi in 1817, Slave; Illinois in 1818, Free; and Alabama in 1819, Slave. This left the balance exactly even, with eleven Free and eleven Slave States.

Directly west of Kentucky stretched the vast Territory of Missouri, which, with a population of 60,000, was at this time (1819) demanding admission as a Slave State. Arkansas was also being carefully fostered by the pro-slavery party, and would likewise ere long be asking for admission. This would give the Southerners the balance of power in Congress. The imminence of such a danger roused the Northerners and forced the slavery question to the front as a burning national issue crying for settlement. The North controlled the House of Representatives, which was elected on a basis of one member per 30,000 of population, whilst the South controlled the Senate. As neither party would give way a deadlock seemed inevitable. Under these circumstances a party of compromise sprang up, which succeeded in producing a temporary arrangement acceptable to both parties. This was the famous Missouri Compromise, which became law on 6th March 1820. It divided the Louisiana purchase between freedom and slavery by a line drawn at 36° 30′ N. lat. South of this line was dedicated to slavery, north of it was consecrated to freedom, the only exception being that part of Missouri north of the line which was allowed to retain its slavery. This settlement included also the admission of Maine as a Free State, and so continued the equilibrium. The Compromise line, it is necessary to remember, did not extend the whole width of the continent, which was not settled in 1820, but ended at a point (approximately) 95° W. long.

Like all political compromises involving a moral

question, it brought only temporary peace. The question, by natural evolution, went on to its final issue, and had to be settled at last on righteous principles, at an immense sacrifice of human life, affording another and very startling proof that there is no finality in such matters except in justice and righteousness. But for the time the Compromise seemed completely successful, and many hoped—what the short-sighted asserted—that permanent peace was at last obtained and the slave question was for ever laid to rest.

By way of insuring the continuance of this settlement, there was a tacit understanding between the parties that the balance of power should be maintained. In pursuance of this policy Arkansas was admitted as a Slave State in 1836, and Michigan, Free, in 1837. Then the South woke up in wild alarm. The slave territory was becoming exhausted, whilst the North had still immense tracts stretching away to the north-west, out of which it could carve new States, and so obtain the preponderance of power. To prevent this the Southerners assisted Texas to shake off the Spanish dominion and to establish itself as an independent republic. Then they demanded its admission to the Union. Eight months after the admission of Florida as a Slave State in 1845 they succeeded, and so obtained a decided advantage. Then the North was aroused and the Mexican war was provoked as a result. It ended in large accessions of territory to the United States, and eventually the organisation of New Mexico and California as Territories. Arizona, now lying exactly between them, was not then in

existence as a separate State. In 1846 the free men secured the admission of Iowa to the Union, and Wisconsin in 1848, and so for a time once more restored the precarious balance of power.

After two years of comparative peace the whole question was re-opened in 1850 by the demand for the admission of New Mexico and California as States, the latter having rapidly acquired a large population owing to the discovery of gold. The gradually deepening intensity of the conflict caused both sides plainly to declare their principles and formulate their demands. The Northerners contended that Congress had the right, and should exercise its right, to prohibit slavery in all the Territories of the Union. They based their contention on the precedents of the Ordinance of 1787 and the Missouri Compromise of 1820. The Southerners took their stand on the inviolability of property before the law, slaves being as much the "property" of their owners as land or goods. By the Mexican laws slavery was already prohibited in New Mexico, and California promptly voted itself free. The North now proposed to admit California as a State, and to organise New Mexico as a Territory. This the South steadily resisted, proposing to extend the Missouri Compromise line farther west, so as to include the whole of New Mexico and South California within the slave limits. Thus the fight waged throughout the whole of 1850, and the South looked more and more persistently to a dissolution of the Union as the only satisfactory solution for her.

Another compromise promised peace for a time. This was initiated by Henry Clay of Kentucky, a slave-holder opposed to the extension of slavery, a popular and powerful statesman. The settlement included the following five points:— (1) The admission of California as a Free State; (2) the organisation of New Mexico and Utah as Territories, the former retaining its laws against slavery; (3) the abolition of the domestic slave trade existing in the district of Columbia; (4) the enactment of a stronger Fugitive Slave Law; and (5) the payment of ten million dollars to Texas for the "scientific rectification" of her frontier. The most important of these measures of conciliation was the Fugitive Slave Law, pioneered through Congress by Senator Mason, a Southern representative who a few years later nearly became the occasion of war between England and the Federalists. He was one of the two Confederate commissioners taken from the English vessel *Trent* by a Federal ship of war, when on his way to Europe to secure the recognition of the Confederates as belligerents. The main provisions of this famous Act were as follow:— The claimant for an alleged fugitive slave could apply to any court in his own State and obtain, on producing proof, a record attesting his right to the person described. That record had to be received as evidence by the authorities of any State to which the claimant might apply, and they were bound to deliver up the fugitive, after identification, without delay. No jury was called,

neither could the slave give evidence in his own defence. To facilitate the working of the law, special commissioners were appointed to administer it, in addition to the ordinary judges, and each commissioner or judge who decided against a slave received a fee of ten dollars, but his fee was reduced to half if his verdict was in favour of the slave. A law officer who refused to arrest a fugitive was subjected to a fine of a thousand dollars, and had to pay the full value of the slave if he escaped. Any citizen rescuing a re-captured fugitive, or assisting in his escape, should pay a fine of one thousand dollars to the State, one thousand dollars to the owner, and undergo a maximum of six months' imprisonment.

This Act at once put in peril twenty thousand escaped slaves who were living at peace in the Northern States. It roused all friends of freedom to a white heat of indignation, and wrung from James Russell Lowell those noble lines:—

"I first drew in New England's air, and from her hardy breast
Sucked in the tyrant-hating milk that will not let me rest;
And if my words seem treason to the dullard and the tame,
'Tis but my Bay-State dialect—our fathers spake the same!

Shame on the costly mockery of piling stone on stone
To those who won our liberty, the heroes dead and gone,
While we look coldly on and see law-shielded ruffians slay
The men who fain would win their own, the heroes of to-day!

. . . . . .

Though we break our fathers' promise, we have nobler duties first;
The traitor to Humanity is the traitor most accursed;

Man is more than Constitutions ; better rot beneath the sod,
Than be true to Church and State while we are doubly false to God !

We owe allegiance to the State ; but deeper, truer, more,
To the sympathies that God hath set within our spirit's core ;—
Our country claims our fealty ; we grant it so, but then
Before Man made us citizens, great Nature made us men.

He's true to God who's true to man ; wherever wrong is done
To the humblest and the weakest, 'neath the all-beholding sun,
That wrong is also done to us ; and they are slaves most base,
Whose love of right is for themselves, and not for all their race.

God works for all. Ye cannot hem the hope of being free
With parallels of latitude, with mountain-range or sea.
Put golden padlocks on Truth's lips, be callous as ye will,
From soul to soul o'er all the world leaps one electric thrill.

. . . . . .

But from the land of bondage, 'tis decreed our slaves shall go,
And signs to us are offered, as erst to Pharaoh ;
If we are blind, their exodus, like Israel's of yore,
Through a Red Sea is doomed to be, whose surges are of gore.

'Tis ours to save our brethren, with peace and love to win
Their darkened hearts from error, ere they harden it to sin ;
But if before his duty man with listless spirit stands,
Ere long the Great Avenger takes the work from out his hands."

Daniel Webster had exerted his great influence to secure the passing of the Act. Fast bound to legal forms, he was faithful to the letter of the law whilst proving traitor to the rights of humanity, as he sternly denounced all warm-hearted men as traitors to the State who resisted the enforcement

of the odious law. Emerson flamed: "All the drops of his blood have eyes that look downward, and his finely-developed understanding only works truly and with all its force when it stands for animal good—that is, for property." *

One or two attempts to capture escaped slaves in Boston led to conflicts between the people and the civil power, and for a time—in 1854—the city was occupied by the military. Theodore Parker was conspicuous as a leader of rescue parties, and denounced the law in no measured terms. As poor Anthony Burns was led back to slavery in a hollow square of United States troops, all Boston looked on with burning cheeks and ill-suppressed indignation. As the procession made its way to the harbour, where a Government vessel was waiting to convey the wretched slave back to his doom, shops were shut, bells tolled as for a funeral, flags waved at half-mast, and the streets were hung with black drapery. And Emerson said: "The famous town of Boston is his master's hound." A few such incidents set the heather on fire throughout the New England States. Vigilance Committees were formed to resist the enforcement of the law, and judges, magistrates and clergy headed protests against it. Mayors presided at indignation meetings, and judges openly refused to administer a law so repugnant to the moral sense of the community. Many States passed Personal

* Both in his letters and journal he condemns roundly "Mr Webster's treachery," and says it is "a law which no man can obey or abet the obeying without loss of self-respect and forfeiture of the name of a gentleman."—CABOT'S *Memoir*, Vol. II., pp. 196-198.

Liberty Acts, and so prevented its operation within their borders. It is said that in six years only some two hundred escaped slaves were re-committed to slavery under its provisions. It was repealed in 1860.

Many regarded these indications of popular feeling as mere passing ebullitions which would speedily die away, and echoed the cry of interested politicians, "Peace, peace," when there was no peace. For righteousness had not yet prevailed and justice had not yet been done. Greater forces were at work than most of the actors in these political manœuvrings were aware of. Instead of guiding and moulding affairs as they imagined, they were but flotsam and jetsam on a tide which was carrying them and the whole nation onward to a terrible national convulsion, in which, at last, the slavery question would find a just solution.

At the Presidential Election of 1852 the Democrats, who were largely Southerners, and the slave party carried their nominee against the Republicans and Northerners, who were mostly anti-slavery men. Franklin Pierce, the new President, was a Northerner who sympathised with the South and slavery. But he did not propose to re-open the settlement of 1850. In his inaugural address he said: "I fervently trust that the question is at rest, and that no sectional, or ambitious, or fanatical excitement may again threaten the durability of our institutions, or obscure the light of our prosperity." Both party conventions resolved not to interfere with the compromise, nor to raise the slavery ghost again.

But the Fates decreed otherwise.

Stephen Douglas, a Democratic senator from Illinois, a candidate for the Presidency, chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, and later the great antagonist of Abraham Lincoln, was the means of re-opening the great debate and of securing an important temporary advantage for his party. He had piloted the 1850 compromise through Congress with Senator Mason, and on its final reading said: "In taking leave of this subject I wish to state that I have determined never to make another speech on the slavery question," and defended it against the extreme men of the South, declaring that the principle of Territorial prohibition was no violation of Southern State rights.

The constant stream of immigrants westwards encroached more and more upon the reserves intended for the Red Men, and each one who wanted a concession applied to Douglas, or his friend W. A. Richardson of Illinois, chairman of the House of Representatives Committee on Territories. To meet these claims, in February 1853 Richardson introduced in the House of Representatives a bill known as the First Nebraska Bill, to organise a new Territory between the Missouri River on the east and the Rocky Mountains on the west. The bill contained no reference to the Ordinance of 1787. It failed to pass the Senate. But two delegates from the new Territory had arrived at Washington, and under pressure from them the Second Nebraska Bill was produced. The Committee on Territories discussed the slavery question, and reported that they

were bound by the settlement of 1850, but neither affirmed nor repudiated the Missouri Compromise. Prolonged discussions resulted in a sharp division in the Democratic Party itself, members from the South claiming the right of property in slaves in the Free States, members from the North holding that the question should be decided by local State law—described as "squatter sovereignty"—in other words, by "local option." But rather than make a breach in their ranks and so lose their political ascendency, they agreed to abide by the decision of the judges of the Supreme Court.

A multitude of secret negotiations followed, which finally resulted in the introduction of the Third Nebraska Bill by Douglas in the Senate on 23rd January 1854, after he had persuaded the President to adopt it as a Government measure. It organised two Territories—Nebraska and Kansas—instead of one, covering an area of some fifteen million acres, declared the Missouri Compromise "inoperative," and left the question of freedom or slavery to be decided by the Territories themselves. The South was all but unanimous in its favour; the North, unhappily, was divided. In four months' time it passed into law, repealing the Missouri Compromise after thirty-four years' duration. This was hailed as a splendid victory for the slave-holders, and received as a heavy blow by the Free-soilers. It led to several very important results. In order to secure a vote for slavery in the new Territories the neighbouring Slave States sent over organised bands of armed

desperadoes—known as Border Ruffians—who at the bayonet's point insisted on voting where they had not a shadow of qualification. The "squatters" naturally resented these lawless proceedings, and the result was the commencement of the Kansas Border Wars — in which John Brown took so large a share—and other similar struggles elsewhere. The next effect was the heavy defeat of the Democrats at the election of 1854. They left the House of Representatives 159 strong; they returned with only seventy-five members. The conscience of the nation had emphatically condemned them.

And thirdly this. As soon as the Northerners realised the full meaning of the Act, which lack of unity among their representatives had prevented them doing as soon as was desirable, they were roused to a white heat of indignation, under which old party lines gradually became obliterated, and a new combination steadily formed itself. There had been an "Abolitionist" party in existence since 1840 with 158,000 voters, and they at once began an active agitation for "As you were." The Whigs and Free-soilers now rallied to them, and the result was the formation of the modern Republican Party in 1856, with opposition to slavery as its main principle. It had control of the Government for over twenty years. And further, as the crowning result, it brought Abraham Lincoln back into political life, from which he had been almost entirely absent since the close of his short period in Congress—1847-49. His public

debates with Stephen Douglas—beginning in the autumn of 1854 — earned for him a national reputation, and all lovers of freedom began to look to him as their leader in the struggle which must come. At length, borne along on the steadily-rising tide of national sentiment, which the brutal assault on Sumner in the Senate chamber, and the decision of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case, tended only to accentuate, he distanced all rivals in the Republican Party, and in 1860 was elected President of the United States, within twelve months of the execution of John Brown as a traitor.

The Southerners regarded his election as the final closing of the door on all hope of securing their ends by political action, and, led by South Carolina, voted themselves out of the Union. The Civil War followed, ending with the final extinction of slave-holding throughout the Union.

CHAPTER III

JOHN BROWN'S BOYHOOD

JOHN BROWN was born at Torrington, Connecticut, on 9th May 1800, his life running parallel with the century. He came of a sturdy Puritan stock, being sixth in descent from Peter Brown, one of the Pilgrim Fathers who landed from the *Mayflower* at Plymouth, Massachusetts, on 22nd December 1620. Hatred of oppression and wrong throbbed in his blood. His grandfather was an officer in the Revolutionary Army under Washington. He died during an epidemic in camp at New York in 1776. Owen Brown, a son of the captain, married a daughter of Gideon Mills, also an officer under Washington, and a descendant of a Dutch settler. Soon after marriage Owen moved to Torrington, where John was born and spent the first five years of his life. The family then moved to Hudson, Ohio, where Owen Brown became one of the trustees of Oberlin College, and lived a long life highly respected, dying at the age of eighty-seven. "I came with a determination to help build up," he says in his autobiography, "and be a help in the support of religion and civil order."

We are largely indebted for what few details we have of John Brown's boyhood to a letter he wrote late in life to a young friend—Henry L. Stearns—who had given him his pocket-money to aid in the fight against slavery. Brown writes from Red Rock, Iowa, 15th July 1857. He was then travelling east in the hope of raising money for an armed interference with slavery. From this letter we learn that when the family settled in Ohio it was "a wilderness filled with wild beasts and Indians." At that early age John was learning to drive cows and ride horses. At six he was dressing deer-skins, rambling about the woods capturing birds and squirrels, and making acquaintance with the camps of Indians. Such little incidents as the gift of a "yellow marble"—the first he had seen—by an Indian boy, and the capture of a squirrel—"bob-tail"—apparently remained very vividly in his memory even towards the end of his days. Running about bare-footed and bare-headed he was early inured to great physical fatigue, and showed an abundance of vitality which found vent in the roughest and most boisterous of games, running, jumping and wrestling. He spent very little time at school, the restraint and discipline of which were terribly irksome to him. The free life of the woods was more to his taste, and nothing delighted him more than to be sent on long journeys across country. At twelve he took a drove of cattle a hundred miles, single-handed, and would have felt decidedly insulted had any help been offered him.

When eight years of age the greatest sorrow of his early life came upon him in the death of his mother, a loss he felt permanently. His father married again, and although the stepmother treated him kindly he never really took her into his affections, but continued to pine for his own mother for years. This prolonged sorrow threw him back upon himself, and strengthened his natural tendency to be reserved, shy and uncommunicative.

In 1812, in the midst of our struggle with Napoleon, the famous Orders in Council issued by our Government, compelling all vessels on their way to ports under our blockade to touch first at British harbours, led to a war with the United States, which unhappily continued for two years. During this war Owen Brown supplied the United States army with cattle, and John had many opportunities of seeing war at close quarters as he went to and fro with them. Henry D. Thoreau says: "He accompanied his father to the camp, and assisted in his employment, seeing a great deal of military life — more, perhaps, than if he had been a soldier, for he was often present at the councils of the officers. He learned by experience how armies are supplied and maintained in the field. He saw enough of military life to disgust him with it and to excite in him a great abhorrence of it. Though tempted by the offer of some petty office in the army when about eighteen, he not only declined to accept this, but refused to train, and was fined in consequence. He then resolved

that he would have nothing to do with any war, unless it were a war for liberty." Another lasting impression left on his mind by one of the incidents of this war time had better be described in his own words. He said it "led him to declare or swear eternal war with slavery," and converted him into a red-hot Abolitionist. He speaks of himself in the third person. "He was staying for a short time with a very gentlemanly landlord, once a United States marshal, who held a slave boy near his own age, very active, intelligent, and of good feeling, and to whom John was under considerable obligation for numerous little acts of kindness. The master made a great pet of John, brought him to table with his first company and friends, called their attention to every little smart thing he said or did, and to the fact of his being more than a hundred miles from home with a company of cattle alone, while the negro boy, who was fully, if not more than, his equal, was badly clothed, poorly fed and lodged in cold weather, and beaten before his eyes with iron shovels or any other thing that came to hand. This brought John to reflect on the wretched, hopeless condition of fatherless and motherless slave children. He sometimes would raise the question, 'Is God their Father?'"

Though his education at school was very defective, covering not "so much knowledge of common arithmetic as the four ground rules" or touching grammar at all—"I know no more of grammar than one of that farmer's calves," he

would often say—yet, thanks to the kindly advice of an old friend of the family, he was early induced to read history and biography rather extensively for a boy in his position. The effect of his reading was a serious habit of mind, a liking for the company of his seniors or superiors in ability or knowledge, and an avoidance of bad or frivolous company. He "had been taught from earliest childhood to 'fear God and keep His commandments,' and, though quite sceptical, he had always by turns felt much serious doubt as to his future well-being, and about this time (1815) became to some extent a convert to Christianity, and ever after was a firm believer in the Divine authenticity of the Bible. With this Book he was familiar, and possessed a most unusual memory of its contents." Throughout his life his knowledge of Scriptural phrases was most marked, and they constantly appeared in his conversation. This feeling for religion deepened in his mind until at eighteen years of age we find him studying for the Congregational Ministry. A prolonged inflammation of the eyes interrupted his studies, and he finally abandoned them, giving up all idea of entering the ministry. His studies had the effect of confirming the serious bent of his mind, and cherished his earnest desire to do good during his life. The Church lost probably an indifferent minister, the cause of human progress gained a true champion, and the poor slave his second greatest martyr. For John Brown stands out as the great martyr at the "beginning of the

end" of slavery, as Abraham Lincoln nobly marks with his martyrdom its close.

Brown next turned his attention to land-surveying — in this also like Lincoln — and in the course of his duty traversed a large part of Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, thus becoming minutely acquainted with the scenes of some of his subsequent exploits. He was said to have had the keen senses of a hunter or an Indian, to be remarkably clear-sighted, quick of ear and skilled in all the devices of woodcraft.

CHAPTER IV

BUSINESS AND FAMILY LIFE

ACTING on his father's advice, when little more than twenty years of age, Brown married, on 21st June 1820, Dianthe Lusk, at Hudson, Ohio. He thus describes her in the previously-mentioned letter to H. L. Stearns, written thirty-seven years afterwards:— She was "a remarkably plain, but neat, industrious and economical girl, of excellent character, earnest piety, and good practical common sense, about one year younger than himself. This woman, by her mild, frank, and—more than all else—by her very consistent conduct, acquired, and ever while she lived maintained, a most powerful and good influence over him. Her plain but kind admonitions generally had the right effect, without arousing his haughty and obstinate temper." In 1832, after twelve years of happy married life, little visited by worldly prosperity, she died, leaving him with five children, two having predeceased her.

The next year, 1833, he married Mary A. Day of Meadville, Pennsylvania, then only in her eighteenth year. By this marriage he had seven sons and six daughters. She proved a true helpmeet to him, entering heartily into all his plans for the liberation

of the slaves, patiently bearing hardship, poverty, prolonged separation from her husband, yea, even the loss of her noble sons to further the sacred cause of freedom. And when the end came, and absolute failure, like an awful blight, fell upon their cherished schemes and life-long sacrifices, when Brown himself lay under sentence of death, no word of reproach escaped her lips, nor remotest suggestion that she would have had it otherwise, or that she regretted any step they had taken. "No man," she said of him when he was waiting execution, "no man ever had a kinder heart; he is generous by nature; he has always aimed to impress his family with a spirit of benevolence; he has always taught his children to be unselfish—to act for others before acting for themselves." She was a noble woman, fit wife for a hero.

Brown first engaged in tanning, which he conducted with his usual exact scrupulousness and rectitude, refusing to sell his leather if it contained the least removable moisture, lest his customers should be defrauded of their proper weight. Later he added sheep farming, and it is said his powers of observation were so keen that he could tell if only a single stray sheep had wandered into his flock. From 1826 to 1846 we find him removing frequently from place to place, engaging in different branches of trade in the true American fashion. In 1826 he went to Richmond, Pennsylvania, where he joined the Presbyterian Church, with which he remained more or less in association to the end of his life. Here his first wife died and he married again. In 1835 he removed to Franklin Mills, Ohio,

still conducting his tanning business, but dealing also in sheep and cattle. In 1840 he returned to Hudson, Ohio, where he had first commenced housekeeping, entering now upon the wool trade. This business he continued at Akron, in the same State, forming now a partnership with a Mr Perkins, finally settling at Springfield, Massachusetts, where they opened a large wool warehouse. Although he attended diligently to business, and had the reputation of being an upright, trustworthy man, the venture did not succeed. The New England manufacturers had been accustomed to buy wool direct from the sheep farmers practically on their own terms. They therefore resented the intrusion of the new firm, and formed a combination not to deal with Perkins & Brown.

Brown promptly met the difficulty by taking about 200,000 lbs. weight of wool to England, hoping to sell it there to better advantage. Unfortunately, it turned out a bad speculation, realising only about half its value on the London market, and all but ruined the firm. Brown was reduced almost to penury. It does not, however, seem to have depressed his spirits very seriously. He had never accepted the ordinary man's estimate of money and worldly prosperity. He was much more concerned to put wrong things right, as far as he was able, than to make money. We only get a few glimpses of him in England. Webb quotes a letter from a friend of his to this effect:—"I heard the following story told of him while in England, where he went to consult wool merchants and wool growers. One evening, in company with several of these persons, each of whom had

brought samples of wool in his pocket, Brown was giving his opinion as to the best use to be made of certain varieties, when one of the party, wishing to play a trick on the Yankee farmer, handed him a sample and asked him what he would do with such wool as that. His eyes and fingers were then so good that he had only to touch it to know that it had not the minute hooks by which the fibres of wool are attached to each other. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'if you have any machinery that will work up dog's hair, I would advise you to put this into it.' The jocose Briton had sheared a poodle and brought the hair in his pocket, but the laugh went against him."

To some prominent English Liberationists Brown disclosed a plan for the forcible liberation of slaves. They gave him no encouragement, but appear to have warmly discountenanced any armed intervention such as he suggested. It did not, however, weaken his resolution to attempt such an enterprise at some future time. He believed that he "held a commission direct from God to act against slavery," and strong in that belief he quietly put aside the well-meant discouragements of timid friends. This probably was the first occasion on which he had taken anyone into his confidence with regard to his plans and hopes, beyond the members of his own family. Before returning to the States he visited France and Germany, two subjects engaging his attention mainly—agriculture and military affairs. He watched reviews of troops with the greatest interest, making mental notes the while, and sketching designs for forest fortifications,

behind which he hoped runaway slaves would dare to fight for freedom. Napoleon's battlefields had a powerful attraction for him, as he had for years followed that stormy petrel's career with the closest attention possible in his circumstances. One result of his observations was that he thought a standing army one of the greatest curses possible to a country, and he returned to America with his love for his own country strengthened, but with, if possible, an intenser hatred of her great curse, slavery.

Like a true Yankee, he had no hesitation in rapidly changing from one trade to another, and from time to time he tried various avocations. His father had taught him the tanning trade, but within a few years from the time at which we have now arrived he was occupied as a land-surveyor, lumber-dealer, postmaster, wool-grower, farmer, fruit-grower, wool-factor and sorter, breeder of horses, stock-fancier, land-speculator and pioneer in a new country. In all he was energetic and industrious, working hard and long, but in none did worldly prosperity permanently smile upon him. In 1842, at Akron, he became bankrupt, and although he speedily secured his discharge, he wrote to his principal creditors acknowledging his indebtedness and promising "to pay the same and the interest thereon, from time to time, as Divine Providence shall enable me to do." At his death he had not discharged the whole of his liabilities, and in his will he left fifty dollars for that purpose, a provision duly honoured by his family. Prolonged litigation followed on

his failure, and it was several years before he got clear of legal entanglements.

The wool business having failed, he had to secure some other means of livelihood, and just then circumstances seemed to shape themselves so that he could serve his dual purpose of finding a home for his family and furthering his plans for the liberation of the slaves.

Mr Gerrit Smith, of Peterboro, New York, a large landed proprietor, a philanthropist, and a keen Abolitionist, was at this time offering tracts of land in the Adirondack Mountains, N.E. New York, to coloured settlers, a preference being given to escaped slaves. Many had accepted his offers, and Brown thought he saw in these men just the raw material he required for his cherished enterprise. He heard that the settlers had been so badly cheated by a dishonest surveyor that the settlement was in danger of failure at the very outset. This of itself was sufficient to move Brown to interfere to set things right as far as he was able. Therefore he made the following charcteristic offer to Mr Smith:—

"I see by the newspapers that you have offered so many acres of wild land to each of the coloured men, on condition that they cultivate them. Now, they are mostly inexperienced in this kind of work, and unused to the climate, while I am familiar with both. I propose, therefore, to take a farm there myself, clear it and plant it, showing the negroes how such work should be done. I will also employ some of them on my land, and will look after them in all ways, and will be a kind of father to them." Although

Mr Smith had not seen Brown before he readily fell in with the proposal, granted him the land, and consented to the experiment being tried.

Thus in the summer of 1849 Brown and his family moved to North Elba. He had at this time ten children living, the two eldest, John and Jason, being married. As, with the exception of another term at Hudson as a wool merchant from 1851-55—during which he exhibited wool at the London exhibition of 1851—this was John Brown's final home, we will quote Mr T. W. Higginson's description of it as it appeared in November 1859, when he went to take the sad news of the verdict to the family, and accompany Mrs Brown to Charlestown for a last interview with her husband.

He approached it after twenty-two miles of mountain road from Keesville, through a wild gap in the mountains, beyond which lie the lovely lakes and mountains of the Adirondack. "The Notch seems beyond the world, North Elba with its half-dozen houses are beyond the Notch, and there is a wilder little mountain road which rises beyond North Elba. But the house we seek is not even on that road, but behind it and beyond it. You ride a mile or two, then take down a pair of bars; beyond the bars faith takes you across a half-cleared field, through the most difficult of wood paths, and after a half a mile of forest you come out upon a clearing. There is a little farm house, unpainted, set in a girdle of black stumps, and with all heaven about it for a wider girdle; on a high hillside, forests on the north and west, the glorious line of the Adirondacks on

the east, and on the south one slender road leading off to Westport, a road so straight that you could sight a U.S. marshal for five miles." Resting against the house was the old tombstone of John Brown's grandfather, and under his name was the freshly-carved inscription to Frederick Brown, "murdered at Ossawattomie for his adherence to the cause of freedom." At a later date John Brown's own name was added, at his express wish. Writing from Hudson, Ohio, 27th May 1857, he had said: "If I should never return, it is my particular request that no other monument be used to keep me in remembrance than the same plain old one that records the death of my grandfather and son; and that a short story, like those already on it, be told of John Brown the Fifth." Mr Higginson continues:—"The farm is a wild place, cold and bleak. It is too cold to raise corn; indeed, they can scarcely, in the most favourable seasons, obtain a few ears for roasting. Stock must be wintered for nearly six months every year. . . . They never raise anything to sell off that farm except a few fleeces. It was well, they said, if they raised their own provisions and could spin their own wool for clothing."

In looking at Brown's relations to his family one feature stands out remarkably prominent, viz., the complete faith of every member in his integrity, their absolute belief in the righteousness of the cause he had voluntarily undertaken to champion, and in the justice of the means he had chosen to secure his great end. He had trained a band of enthusiasts, a family of heroes. The whole scheme of their lives

was formed to promote one object. The sons eagerly seconded their father. "They could not live for themselves alone," they told their wives on leaving them. Oliver, barely twenty, writing to his young wife from Harper's Ferry just before his death, said, "If I can do a single good action my life will not have been all failure."

When one sympathised with Salmon Brown—who remained at North Elba—on the heavy sacrifices the family had made, he quietly replied, "I sometimes think that is what we came into the world for—to make sacrifices."

And those who married into the family caught the same single-eyed devotion also. Few greater tests of Brown's absolute sincerity could be required than this. For years, though attentive to business, he had so conducted his affairs that he could wind them up at the shortest notice, whenever the favourable moment should occur for his attempt to be made.

In dress he was plain and unpretending, but scrupulously clean. He rose early and worked hard and late. He was of very abstemious habits, never touched spirits, wines, or tobacco, and only in his later years allowed himself the luxury of tea and coffee, when his constant absence from home made it convenient to take what his friends supplied. As a father he was tender yet strict, enforcing prompt obedience. His eldest son John relates a striking experience, illustrating this combination of the stern disciplinarian with the affectionate parent. He says he was first put to the tanning business, and for three years his

chief duty was to attend to the grinding of bark with a blind horse. Boy-like, he took spells of play when his father was absent, and frequently forgot to supply the machine with the necessary bark. "But the creaking of the hungry mill would betray my neglect, and then father, hearing this from below, would come up and stealthily pounce upon me while at a window looking upon outside attractions. He finally grew tired of these frequent slight admonitions for my laziness and other shortcomings, and concluded to adopt with me a sort of book account, something like this :—

John, Dr.

For disobeying mother . .	8 lashes
For unfaithfulness at work .	3 „
For telling a lie . . .	8 „

This account he showed me from time to time. On a certain Sunday morning he invited me to accompany him from the house to the tannery, saying that he concluded it was time for a settlement. We went into the upper or finishing room, and after a long and tearful talk over my faults he again showed me my account, which exhibited a fearful footing up of *debits*. I had no credits or off-sets, and was of course bankrupt. I then paid about *one-third* of the debt, reckoned in strokes from a nicely-prepared blue-beech switch, laid on 'masterly.' Then, to my utter astonishment, father stripped off his shirt, and seating himself on a block, gave me the whip and bade me 'lay it on' to his bare back. I dared not

refuse to obey, but at first I did not strike hard. 'Harder,' he said, 'harder! harder!' until *he received the balance of the account.* Small drops of blood showed on his back where the tip end of the tingling beech cut through. Thus ended the account and the settlement, which was also my first practical illustration of the doctrine of the Atonement."

The Bible was the first book used by his children, and morning and evening prayer, grace before and after meals was the daily law of the household. According to the testimony of one of his daughters, his "favourite books of an historical character were Rollin's *Ancient History*, Josephus's *Works*, the *Lives of Napoleon and His Marshals* and *The Life of Oliver Cromwell*, of religious books, Baxter's *Saint's Rest*, the *Pilgrim's Progress* and *Henry on Meekness*. But above all others the Bible was his favourite volume, and he had such a perfect knowledge of it that, when any person was reading it, he would correct the least mistake. When he came home at night, tired out with labour, he would, before going to bed, ask some of the family to read chapters (as was his usual course night and morning), and would almost always say 'Read one of David's Psalms.' He was a great admirer of Oliver Cromwell."

She adds, his favourite passages from the Bible were these:—

"'Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them.'

"'Whoso stoppeth his ear at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself, but shall not be heard.'

"'He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth his bread to the poor.'

"'A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver or gold.'

"'Whoso mocketh the poor, reproacheth his Maker; and he that is glad at calamities, shall not be unpunished.'

"'He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth to the Lord, and that which he hath given will He pay to him again.'

"'Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.'

"'A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast; but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.'

"'Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.'

"'Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it; except the Lord keepeth the city, the watchman walketh in vain.'

"'I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love.'

"The last chapter of Ecclesiastes was a favourite one, and on Fast-Days and Thanksgivings he used very often to read the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. . . .

"His favourite hymns (Watts') were these: 'Blow ye the trumpet, blow!' 'Sweet is Thy Word, my God, my King!' 'I'll praise my Maker,' 'Oh, happy is the man who hears!' 'Why should we start and fear to die!' 'With songs and honours sounding loud,' 'Ah, lovely appearance of death!'"

Each Sunday afternoon, when he was at home, all the family, old and young, were required to repeat the Ten Commandments. Then he usually spoke to them, sometimes for half an hour, or even two hours, "just as he or they might be interested." "First pure, then peaceable" was his conception of religion. Love for God was to be shown by good-will to men. Tried by this test slave-holding was the cardinal sin. He used to say that his principles were summed up in the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence. The chief end of man was to do good to his fellows, and above all to remember those in bondage. In one of his last letters to his wife he requested that little Ellen, his youngest child of only five years, should be taught a couplet each of the other children had learned.

> "Count that day lost whose low-descending sun,
> Views from thy hand no worthy action done."

Two years previously he had sent her a Bible with this inscription:—

"This Bible, presented to my dearly-beloved daughter, Ellen Brown, is not intended for common use, but to be carefully preserved for her and by her in remembrance of her father (of whose care and attention she was deprived in her infancy, he being absent in the Territory of Kansas from the summer of 1855).

"May the Holy Spirit of God incline your heart, in earliest childhood, 'to receive the truth in the love of it,' and to form your thoughts, words and actions by its wise and holy precepts is my best wish and most

earnest prayer to Him in whose care I leave you. Amen. From your affectionate father,

"JOHN BROWN.

"*2nd April* 1857."

And two years later, just before the attack on Harper's Ferry, he wrote to his daughter Anne: "Anne, I want you first of all to become a sincere, humble and consistent Christian, and then to acquire good and efficient business habits. Save this to remember your father by, Anne. God Almighty bless and save you all."

His daughter, Mrs Thompson, describing the death of his first daughter, Ellen, says:—"Father showed much tenderness in the care of the little sufferer. He spared no pains in doing all that medical skill could do for her, together with the tenderest care and nursing. The time that he could be at home was mostly spent in caring for her. He sat up nights to keep an even temperature in the room and to relieve mother from the constant care which she had through the day. He used to walk with the child and sing to her so much that she soon learned his step. When she heard him coming up the steps to the door she would reach out her hands and cry for him to take her. When his business at the wool store crowded him so much that he did not have time to take her, he would steal around through the wood-shed into the kitchen to eat his dinner, and not go into the dining-room, where she could see or hear him. I used to be charmed myself with his singing to her. He noticed a change in her one morning, and told us he thought

she would not live through the day, and came home several times to see her. A little before noon he came home, and looked at her and said, 'She is almost gone.' She heard him speak, opened her eyes, and put up her little wasted hands with such a pleading look for him to take her that he lifted her from the cradle, with the pillows she was lying on, and carried her until she died. He was very calm, closed her eyes, folded her hands, and laid her in her cradle. When she was buried, father broke down completely, and sobbed like a child. It was very affecting to see him so overcome, when all the time before his great tender heart had tried to comfort our weary, sorrowing mother and all of us."

To his wife he was a devoted, faithful husband, and it was only an overpowering sense of duty—equally shared by her—which took him so much away from home, wife and children. "When I have been ill," she said, "he has always been nurse, unless he was compelled to be absent. For two weeks together he has sat up, night after night, just to keep alive the fire, fearing, if he were to lie down and go soundly to sleep, it would go out and I should thereby take cold. Many and many a time he has bid me good-bye, hardly able to speak for his tears, saying that he never might see me again."

Throughout his letters there are frequent expressions of his warm affection for his wife and family, and his strong desire to be with them. "At almost all places where I stop I am treated with all kindness and attention, but it does not make home. I feel lonely and restless, no matter

how neat and comfortable my room and bed, nor how richly loaded may be the table; they have very few charms for me away from home. I can look back to our log-cabin at the centre of Richfield, with a supper of porridge and johnny-cake, as a place of far more interest to me than the Massasoit (hotel) of Springfield. But 'there's mercy in every place.'" (From Springfield, Mass., 28th November 1850).

And from Kansas, 23rd November 1855, he wrote:—"I think much, too, of your kind of widowed state; and I sometimes allow myself to dream a little of again some time enjoying the comforts of home, but I do not dare to dream much. May God abundantly reward all your sacrifices for the cause of humanity." And a year later, from the same place:—"The idea of again visiting those of my dear family at North Elba is so calculated to unman me, that I seldom allow my thoughts to dwell upon it; and I do not think best to write much about it."

The following letter to his wife is so characteristic in several particulars that it may be quoted in full.

"SPRINGFIELD, MASS., *7th March* 1844.

"MY DEAR MARY,—It is once more Sabbath evening, and nothing so much accords with my feelings as to spend a portion of it in conversing with the partner of my choice and the sharer of my poverty, trials, discredit and sore afflictions, as well as of what comfort and seeming prosperity

has fallen to my lot for quite a number of years. I would you should realise that, notwithstanding I am absent in body, I am very much of the time present in spirit. I do not forget the firm attachment of her who has remained my fast and faithful affectionate friend when others said of me, 'Now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more.' I now feel encouraged to believe that my absence will not be very long. After being so much away it seems as if I knew pretty well how to appreciate the quiet of home. There is a peculiar music in the word which a half-year's absence in a distant country would enable you to understand. Millions there are who have no such thing to lay claim to. I feel considerable regret by turns that I have lived so many years and have in reality done so little to increase the amount of human happiness. I often regret that my manner is no more kind and affectionate to those I really love and esteem; but I trust my friends will overlook my harsh, rough ways when I cease to be in their way as an occasion of pain and unhappiness. In imagination I often see you in your room with Little Chick and that strange Anna. You must say to her that father means to come before long and kiss somebody. I will close by saying that it is my growing resolution to endeavour to promote my own happiness by doing what I can to render those about me more so. If the large boys do wrong, call them alone into your room and expostulate with them kindly, and see if you cannot reach them by a kind but powerful

appeal to their honour. I do not claim that such a theory accords very well with my practice—I frankly confess it does not—but I want your face to shine, even if my own should be dark and cloudy. You can let the family read this letter, and perhaps you may not feel it a great burden to answer it and let me hear all about how you get along. Affectionately yours,

"JOHN BROWN."

Pity for the helpless sufferings of others was the mainspring of his action, and he was content to deny himself the pleasures of home—which he loved with a strong affection—in order to bring relief to those who had no helper. "I want all my family to imagine themselves in the same dreadful condition." And again he refers to "the constant ringing in my ears of the despairing cry of millions whose woes none but God knows." And so profoundly convinced was he of the justice of his cause that "I would be glad that my posterity should not only remember their parentage, but also the cause they laboured in."

This man was certainly no bloodthirsty freebooter, delighting in war, seeking his own selfish ends by its means. He was one who, having hated war from his youth up, was forced into it by the strength of his conviction that the great national curse of his time could not be removed by any other means.

Now, at the age of fifty-five years, taking up his rifle, he risks his life in the promotion of his

principles, and in four short years thrills the whole nation with the story of his deeds and precipitates the great Civil War. Years previously he had written :—"Let our motto still be action, action—as we have but one life to live."

CHAPTER V

THE STRUGGLE FOR KANSAS

KANSAS, which for the next few years became the "cock-pit" of the contending parties, is divided into thirty-six counties, is situated about the centre of the North American Continent, and has an area about equal to Scotland. It "consists of undulating prairies, with a rich and fertile soil, and is well watered by streams flowing through picturesque valleys, generally bordered with woods to the distance of a quarter or half a mile of their high banks on either side." Lying directly west of Missouri, it had for its neighbour one of the bitterest and least scrupulous slave-holding communities in the Union. In 1850 it had a population of 8500, which in ten years increased to 107,000. But during the time of the "struggle for Kansas" the population did not, in all probability, exceed 50,000.

Immediately Douglas had carried his Third Nebraska Bill, and so obtained legal sanction to his doctrine of "squatter sovereignty," the struggle for freedom was transferred from Congress to the newly-organised Territories, and all eyes were turned eagerly towards the West. "Come on, then, gentlemen of the Slave States," said Seward in a Senate discussion;

"since there is no escaping your challenge, I accept it in behalf of Freedom. We will engage in competition for the virgin soil of Kansas, and God give the victory to the side that is stronger in numbers as it is in right." But something of more immediate importance than the "virgin soil of Kansas" was involved in the contest, viz., the question of the preponderance of parties in Congress. The acquisition of Kansas by the South would restore the "balance of power," by equalising the number of Free and Slave States. It would further give the slaveholders a breathing time in which to organise their forces for further acts of aggression. But with right and "big battalions" also on the side of the North, in the proportion of fifteen millions to ten, Kansas would not be lightly lost, and the issue, however long delayed, must finally go against the South.

Both sides prepared to send aid to their friends in the new State in characteristic manner. The North by perfectly legal combination, the South by gross violation of all forms of law, and the constant infringement of the common rights of humanity. The operations of the Massachusetts Emigrant Aid Society are typical of many similar enterprises promoted in the North. The society was organised by the Hon. Eli Thayer, and advertised its readiness to assist any emigrants who desired to go to Kansas, by organising them into companies under the direction of trustworthy agents, and by obtaining reduced transit rates for them from the railway companies. It bought machinery for a few saw-mills, the type for two or three newspapers, and erected a hotel for

the newcomers. Beyond purchasing the land necessary for these undertakings, it engaged in no commercial enterprise, and although it was known to be promoted by Free-soilers it did not inquire into the political opinions of those whom it aided. In July 1854 thirty persons assisted by this society founded the town of Lawrence, near the Missourian border. This little town was destined speedily to become the headquarters of the more determined of the Free State men, and the scene also of some of the most dastardly outrages of the Border Ruffians. These emigrants from the North were, as a rule, genuine settlers, who had come to establish homes for their wives and families. They were—speaking generally—Free-soilers, but their first anxiety was to cultivate the land in peace.

The South — represented by the Missourians— formed along the whole eastern border line of Kansas secret organisations known as "Blue Lodges." Their constitution and aims will become sufficiently apparent as their subsequent deeds are recorded, during many unscrupulous attempts to secure Kansas for slavery. One of their chief leaders was Senator Atchison, acting Vice-President of the United States. He declared the attainment of their object was almost as dear to him as his hope of heaven. Speaking in Platte County, Missouri, on the borders of Kansas, he said, with clumsy phraseology but clear enough meaning:—

"When you reside in one day's journey of the Territory, and when your peace, your quiet and your property depend upon your action, you can without

an exertion send 500 of your young men who will vote in favour of your institutions. Should each county in the State of Missouri only do its duty, the question will be decided quietly and peaceably at the ballot box."* What right they had to cross the border and vote in another State "in favour of your institutions," he does not appear to have explained to them. But they acted upon his advice, nevertheless. Prominent citizens of Missouri led bands of men into Kansas to hold squatter meetings as citizens of Kansas, when they adopted such resolutions as these :—

"That we will afford protection to no Abolitionist as a settler in this Territory."

"That we recognise the institution of slavery as already existing in this Territory, and advise slaveholders to introduce their property as early as possible." But they did not stop there. Webb quotes a speech reported to have been delivered by General Stringfellow at St Joseph, Missouri, in 1854, in which he deliberately incites a sufficiently lawless people to murder. "I tell you to mark every scoundrel among you who is the least tainted with Abolitionism, or Free-soilism, *and exterminate him.* Neither give nor take quarter from the d—— rascals. To those who have qualms of conscience as to violating laws, State or national, I say the time has come when such impositions must be disregarded, as your rights and property are in danger. I advise you, one and all, to enter every election district in Kansas, in defiance of Reeder" (Governor of Kansas, appointed

* Quoted by Nicolay and Hay.

by the U.S. Government) "and his myrmidons, and vote at the point of the bowie-knife and revolver. Neither take nor give quarter, as the cause demands it. It is enough that the slave-holding interest wills it, from which there is no appeal."

O "rights of property," what crimes are committed in thy name!

Needless to say, such traitorous advice, coming from men in the highest positions, and falling upon the very inflammable material scattered over every Slave State, produced the worst possible results in murders, outrages, burnings, wholesale destruction of crops and property, and finally a miniature civil war.

President Pierce, who had the strongest bias towards slavery, appointed Andrew H. Reeder, a member of his own party, the first Governor of Kansas. He was entrusted with full executive and administrative powers until the first Legislature should be duly formed. Noting the preparations made by the Missourians, he deferred the election of a Legislature, and issued a proclamation for the election of a delegate to Congress only. A day or two before the election—which was on 29th November 1854—the whole Missourian border was astir with preparations for a great exodus. Over 1700 Border Ruffians, armed with swords, revolvers and rifles, rushed into Kansas, and took absolute possession of more than half the polling stations. They allowed no one to vote who was known to favour Abolition. They intimidated the returning officers and forced them to register alien votes at the sword's point. A grosser outrage

on "popular sovereignty" can scarcely be conceived than these champions of the "rights of property" thus perpetrated. The *Kansas Herald of Freedom* described in detail what took place in one district, and subsequent investigations by a Committee of Congress showed it was but typical of the remainder.

"In the district of Tecumseh, Mount Burgess, one of the judges appointed by the Governor was violently threatened; a pistol was three times snapped in his face and a club flourished over his head, till finally he was compelled to proclaim the election adjourned. The mob then elected a new Board, with two drunken secretaries, who took possession of the ballot box, and allowed no person to approach it unless he was right on the 'goose question'—a slang phrase used among the Missourians implying they are in favour of extending the institution of slavery over Kansas. No questions were asked the voter as to his citizenship or place of residence, no oath was administered, or other test required, save an assurance of support to the pro-slavery ticket."

Of the 2843 votes recorded, 1729 were subsequently found to be illegal. But for the moment these tactics were successful, and Whitfield, the pro-slavery candidate, was declared duly elected, and the ruffianly mob returned to Missouri loudly rejoicing in their victory over the "Abolition hordes and nigger thieves of the Emigrant Aid Society."

After taking a census of the population Governor

Reeder ordered the election of the Territorial Legislature, appointing 30th March 1855 as the polling day. Knowing the character of the men he had to deal with, the Governor took every precaution in his power to secure a pure election, but his efforts were of no avail. The action of the Missourians in the previous November proved to be a mere trial of strength. This time 5000 of them, armed to the teeth, crossed the border and took possession of the ballot boxes in all directions. Only a few of the polling stations in the more remote districts remained unmolested. According to Nicolay and Hay, "Riot, violence, intimidation, destruction of ballot boxes, expulsion and substitution of judges, neglect or refusal to administer the prescribed oaths, *viva voce* voting, repeated voting on one side, and obstruction and dispersion of voters on the other, were common incidents." Subsequent investigation showed that whilst only 1410 legal votes were cast, there were no less than 4908 illegal ones given. Of the total number cast 5427 were given to pro-slavery candidates, and only 791 to the Free-soilers, every slavery candidate but one being elected.

In actual fear of his life, and in presence of an armed mob, Governor Reeder was forced to issue certificates to the illegally-elected men, but he refused one third of them under plea of defects in their papers. This "bogus" Legislature first met at Pawnee on the summons of the Governor, but after electing Stringfellow speaker removed itself to Shawnee Mission School, close to the Missourian

border. Here it proceeded to oust all the members elected to fill the places of the candidates rejected by the Governor, and to substitute those rejected ones. Next, in great haste it passed the "Revised Statutes of Missouri," with regard to slavery, and in the excess of their unholy zeal added to them a special "Act to punish offences against slave property." A few specimens of its provisions may be given. It prescribed the death penalty for the slight offence of enticing away a slave or assisting him to escape. For concealing a fugitive slave, ten years' imprisonment. For resisting the arrest of a fugitive slave, two years' imprisonment. To print matter calculated to incite slaves to escape was punishable with five years' imprisonment. Even to deny the right of holding slaves by speaking, writing or circulating books or papers would involve two years in gaol. And to make certain the perpetuation of their dominance, they disqualified any man from voting who would not swear, when challenged, to support the Fugitive Slave Law. They thus provided for the permanent disfranchisement of all conscientious Free State men, and had apparently completed their victory for all time.

Meanwhile, reports of their illegal proceedings had outraged public feeling in the North and East, and Free-soil emigrants began to settle in Kansas in increasing numbers. They were mostly of good old Puritan stock, and were frequently heard singing "When I can read my title clear to mansions in the skies" whilst waiting on the railway stations. But they appreciated to the full the value of "Sharpe's

rifles"—a new breech-loader just coming into use—and knew its superiority to the old muskets. They understood and believed in the motto: "Trust in God and keep your powder dry."

Among the earliest of these new arrivals were the four sons of John Brown by his first wife, who removed from Ohio. The two eldest—John and Jason—were married and had families, the latter also possessing a large stock of fruit trees which he took with him. The two younger brothers, Owen and Frederick, followed with the waggons, cattle and horses, wintering in Illinois on the way. This plan proved both expensive and irksome, entailing considerable hardship on the young men, who, however, arrived safely in Kansas in the spring of 1855, after having been joined by Salmon, the youngest of the five. "During this slow journey with their stock across the entire width of Missouri," writes their father, "they heard much from the people of the stores of wrath and vengeance which were then and there gathering for the Free State men and Abolitionists gone or going to Kansas, and were themselves often admonished, in no very mild language, to stop ere it should be too late."

They settled in Lykins County, South Kansas, near the small River Pottawattomie, and soon found that they had not only to contend with the natural hardships of their position—exposure to inclement weather, hard fare and heavy toil—but were subjected in addition to constant annoyance and insult from the self-styled "law and order" men from Missouri. A friend writing of them said:

"The brothers were all Free State men in opinion; but removing thither with the intention of settling down, went without arms. They were harassed, plundered, threatened and insulted by gangs of marauding Border Ruffians, with whom the prime object was plunder; and noisy pro-slavery partisanship was equivalent to a free charter to plunder with impunity. The sons wrote to their father requesting him to procure such arms as might enable them in some degree to protect themselves, and personally to bring them to Kansas."

This was an appeal John Brown was unable to resist. Here was an opportunity of helping his sons—whose sufferings moved him deeply—and at the same time of striking a blow for freedom. Any extension of the untold horrors of slavery he could never regard with composure; and aided by generous New England friends, he was able to take arms and some little money also to his sons in Kansas. He had no intention of settling there himself. One of his children, writing of his departure from North Elba, says: "On leaving us the first time he went to Kansas, he said, 'If it is so painful for us to part, with the hope of meeting again, how dreadful must be the separation for life of hundreds of poor slaves,'" these poor victims being ever uppermost in his thoughts. He reached Kansas in the autumn of 1855. But between the arrival of his sons and his own, several important developments had taken place in the young State.

Governor Reeder, by honestly trying to hold an even balance between the two contending parties,

had rendered himself intensely obnoxious to the Missourians. Therefore President Pierce, who acted throughout as their pliant tool, acceded to their demand for his removal, and appointed Governor Shannon in his place, who immediately threw himself into the arms of the Missourians, and eagerly entered into all their plans. The effect this gross piece of partisanship had upon the public mind of the North is indicated by the following extract from the *New York Evening Post*, then edited by William Cullen Bryant, the poet:—"Governor Reeder found the people whom he was sent out to govern invaded by a lawless band of alien marauders. He resisted them with such weapons as the Constitution and the Law had placed in his hands, and no other. His resistance brought upon him the hostility of those, and those only, whose piratical schemes be foiled. They memorialised the President to remove him; and he has removed him. By that act President Pierce has given countenance and encouragement to those who have openly defied the officers and laws of the Federal Government. By that act he has taken sides with lawlessness and violence against the people of Kansas and public peace. By that act he has made his administration responsible for the composition of the so-called Kansas Legislature, and the outrages which prevented the citizens of the Territory from participating in its election. By that act he has made himself a party to the schemes of Atchison and Stringfellow, and convicted himself and his administration of a deter-

mination from the beginning to make Kansas a Slave State."

The difficulties in the way of any organisation among the Free State settlers were very great, and but for the cruel pressure from without would probably have proved insuperable, or at least delayed in realisation long enough to enable the slavery men completely to capture the State. But bigotry and greed are hard taskmasters, and under their malign influence the Missourians overshot the mark. Their continued outrages showed the Free-soilers that not only was the question of slavery involved, but that their own lives and property were at stake also, and the right to live where they chose. Therefore, driven by sternest necessity, they — utter strangers to each other, coming from widely-separated States, with different habits and customs—by one impulse rallied together for common defence. Their first meeting was held in Lawrence on 15th August 1855, "irrespective of party distinctions, and influenced by common necessity." They resolved to ask all *bona-fide* citizens of Kansas—of whatever political views—to elect delegates to attend a State convention to be held at Topeka on 23rd October. This was a perfectly legal proceeding, being merely the exercise of the elementary rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States, and it ought to have secured the protection of President Pierce's administration.

The convention met as arranged and adopted a constitution, known as the Topeka Constitution, ex-

cluding slavery. It instantly secured the adhesion of all Free State men, and when submitted to the popular vote in December 1855 was accepted by a large majority. But it had no legal validity, the Executive, by a gross misuse of their power, having recognised the "bogus" constitution of the Missourians. Nevertheless, the Topeka men proceeded to a formal election of delegates to the Territorial Legislature in January 1856. Thus, though barely one year old, the infant State found itself with two rival Governments, one elected by a majority of the *bona-fide* inhabitants, but not recognised by the United States Executive, the other elected chiefly by Missourians, but possessing the legal sanction the first lacked. One striking figure at these meetings was that of ex-Governor Reeder, who addressed the convention, wrote a number of the resolutions adopted, and was elected Territorial Delegate to Congress, the Missourians, as before stated, having already sent Whitfield as delegate.

The Topeka Convention repudiated in strong terms the "bogus Legislature" set up by their opponents from over the border, and declared "that we will endure and submit to these laws no longer than the best interests of the Territory require, as the least of two evils, and will resist them *to a bloody issue* as soon as we ascertain that peaceable remedies shall fail." They also resolved on the formation of volunteer companies and the purchase of arms.

General Cass presented this constitution to the Senate for adoption, and asked for the admission of

Kansas to the Union as a Free State. But the Senate was under Southern domination, and President Pierce denounced the constitution as insurrectionary in his annual message to Congress. Thus the only result of the appeal of the Free State men was that they were branded as an illegal combination, to be put down by force of arms.

But they had not gone so far to be turned back easily. They steadily pursued their policy of not acknowledging the Slavery Constitution. "As much as possible they stood aloof from the civil officers appointed by and through the bogus Legislature, recorded no title papers, began no lawsuits, abstained from elections, and denied themselves privileges which required any open recognition of the alien Missourian Statutes." For two years they practised this strict non-conformity, submitting cheerfully to all laws of Congress, all acts of the central authority, and even bore without resistance obnoxious searches and seizures, capricious arrests and imprisonments, the confiscation of their newspapers as treasonable documents, the exclusion of their lawyers from the courts because of their refusal to take the test oath, and many other indignities and outrages, rather than put themselves in the position of rebellious subjects of the United States.

CHAPTER VI

KANSAS BORDER WARS

THE lawless deeds of the Missourians at last forced the Free State men, in spite of their good resolutions, first into acts of defence and then to reprisals. During the "bogus" election of the representative to Congress in October 1855 actual murder was committed in addition to many deeds of violence. In Leavenworth a Free State citizen named John Fornan on refusing to vote for slavery was chased through the streets, a yelling mob at his heels crying, "Hang him! lynch him! tar and feather the Yankee!" Finding they could not overtake him, one of the desperadoes fired. The ball pierced Fornan's hat, and passing through the boards of a neighbouring house killed a little child playing at its mother's feet. Thomas Newman, another anti-slavery man, was knocked down in the street and fatally stabbed at the same time. A hundred Free-soilers armed themselves and gave chase to the murderers, who had decamped; and no wonder the local newspaper exultingly announced that "one of the villains had felt cold steel." The next month a New England emigrant named Dow—obnoxious to the Border

Ruffians as a pronounced anti-slavery man—was murdered in the neighbourhood of Lawrence. The murderer was well known, but was protected by the authorities. Branson, Dow's friend with whom he had lived, on taking home the victim's dead body, was arrested by Sheriff Jones, Missourian, but was rescued by friends and taken to Lawrence. The householders, summoned by drum beat, resolved to stand by him, and a committee was immediately formed for the defence of the town against the attack which was to be anticipated from the representatives of the law. This act provided the excuse for declaring Lawrence in armed rebellion, and 1500 Missourians speedily assembled to invest it. On the other hand, the Free State men rallied to the defence of their chief town, until they mustered over 500 strong. They were formed into companies, drilled regularly, and employed night and day in making small forts, entrenchments and rifle pits. The women entered heroically upon the enterprise, making cartridges, baking bread, and preparing for the nursing of the wounded. A twelve-pound brass howitzer was cleverly smuggled in through the besieger's lines, adding materially to the strength of the defences.

In the midst of these proceedings John Brown arrived with four of his sons, armed with broad-swords and revolvers. Learning the position of affairs, Brown's voice sounded firmly for war. To him it was a holy crusade, and he had a profound conviction that the right would triumph. But for

the moment milder counsels prevailed. The Missourians, seeing what a warm reception was in store for them, delayed the attack, and the longer they looked at it the less they liked the prospect. Their courage was evaporating with their whisky. Governor Shannon arrived, and the Lawrence men willingly agreed to negotiation rather than place themselves in active hostility to the authority of the United States. "General" Lane, who commanded them, summoned a "Council of War," which Brown declined to attend, saying, "Tell the General, when he wants me to fight, to say so, but that is the only order I will obey." The result of the negotiations was that the Lawrence men agreed not to resist any legal process in their midst, whilst the Governor condoned any offences they might have committed, and recognised their volunteer forces as militia of the State.

But the peace was of short duration. Fresh arrivals from the Southern States roused the Missourians to renewed acts of violence. A Mr Brown, the father of a family, took part in rescuing a man from a lynching party. For this he was brutally murdered, the drunken furies literally hacking his body to pieces with axes. At Atchison a clergyman, who admitted in private conversation that he was a Free-soiler, was tarred and feathered, and sent down the river on a raft, Federal office-holders looking on encouragingly. In spite of these dastardly proceedings—many more of which will have to be chronicled before the story ends—true

to the sickening hypocrisy of their tribe the world over, they assumed an air of injured innocence, and posed as suffering martyrs. "Forbearance has now ceased to be a virtue," said their organ, the *Kickapoo Pioneer*. "Kansas must be immediately rescued from the tyrannical dogs. Pro-slavery men, law and order men, strike for your altars! Strike for your firesides! Strike for your rights!"

In the Spring Assizes Chief Justice Lecompte laid down his exposition of "constructive treason," on the strength of which writs were issued for the arrest of the chief Free State leaders, who were compelled to seek safety in flight. Dr Robinson, who had been elected Governor, was arrested on his way to plead their cause at Washington, and kept in confinement for months without trial. Ex-Governor Reeder had to flee in disguise, to save his life. The United States troops, sent to keep the peace, were used by Governor Shannon to harry and hunt the Free State men only, leaving the Missourians undisturbed. In April, Sheriff Jones—postmaster of a Missourian town, nearly fifty miles away from the Kansas County, in which he was supposed to reside—arrived at Lawrence to serve writs on several prominent inhabitants. Unhappily, a young fellow of hot blood shot at and wounded him as he sat in his tent. The Lawrence men denounced and disowned the act immediately. But it was too good a pretext to be lost. Another attack on Lawrence was rapidly organised. Under plea of serving writs the U. S. marshal entered

the town at the head of 800 armed Missourians. His proceedings were quietly submitted to by the townspeople. Having accomplished his duty, he disbanded his men, who were immediately organised as Sheriff Jones's posse, and under his orders proceeded to loot the town. The Free State Hotel, built by the Emigrant Aid Society, was the first object of attack, being battered by cannon and then burnt to the ground. The offices of the two Free State newspapers were next visited! Their machines were broken, the type thrown into the river, the paper destroyed and the buildings wrecked.

The wife of the editor of one of the papers, the *Kansas Tribune*, wrote: "They tore up beds, and ripped them open to find arms. They smashed looking-glasses, dishes, furniture, and even children's toys; ate everything they could, and destroyed the rest of the provisions; broke open trunks and stole money and clothes — Mr Stowell having about 6000 dollars stolen in drafts and land warrants. They stole watches, chains, and all the ladies' jewellery and silk dresses they could find. The ruffians entered the stores, robbed money drawers, pulled off their old shabby duds, and dressed themselves in the best they could find. David Atchison, late Vice-President of our glorious Republic, took two boxes of cigars from Brooks's store, and stole some shirts, one of which the owner recognised on Atchison's back the next day."

John Doy of Lawrence, who published his *Narrative* in New York in 1860, gives another account of proceedings of this "law and order" party. The night of the sack of Lawrence, he says: "My beautiful brood mares and other animals were stolen by the invaders, my growing corn and wheat trampled down and ruined, and we were left without the means to cultivate our crops. On the next day twenty-eight men tied their horses to my fence, came to the house and asked me,—

"'Are you from the East?'

"'Yes!'

"'Then you're a d—— Abolitionist?'

"'Of course.'

"Without more words they cleaned out my house of everything they wanted."

One night, he says, they saw six houses burning in their immediate neighbourhood, and continues: "Men were murdered, women and girls were violated, and the invading mob treated the Free State people of Kansas as if they were conquered slaves." Doy adds—in this expressing the feelings of his co-patriots, anxious as they were for peace—"We would not consent to bring up our children in a land cursed by the toil of slaves. This was the only condition on which we could hope for peace. There was one other way, however, and that we determined to adopt. We could, and we would, conquer a place. We could endure the present state of things no longer. We felt that they

would go from bad to worse, and we swore to treat the invaders as noxious vermin; we would drive them out or die. . . . We made oath to stand by each other and by freedom for Kansas until death."

But it is not to be supposed that the whole of the Northern settlers were actuated by the same determined spirit, or that they all hated slavery sufficiently to risk their lives for its Abolition. Many hated the blacks as competitors in the labour market, and the only political meeting John Brown attended in Kansas was one called for the purpose of declaring the young community a "Free *white* State," a decision which would have permanently excluded the free black man, as well as the slave. Brown surprised many by the vigour and earnestness with which he denounced the doctrine of placing any man under civil disabilities because of the colour of his skin. He boldly asserted the manhood and equal rights of the African race.

He had settled with his sons at Pottawattomie, and there quickly gathered around him a knot of earnest anti-slavery men, who looked up to him as leader. The district thus became peculiarly obnoxious to the Missourians, who—about the time of the sack of Lawrence—began to gather threateningly in the neighbourhood. Past experience warned the settlers that these indications of hostility could not be safely ignored. To ascertain the plans of his enemies, Brown adopted a bold expedient. It will be remembered that early in his career he had studied

surveying. His knowledge now stood him in good stead. Accompanied by a few daring companions, he set out on a surveying expedition, carrying his imaginary lines through the centre of his enemies' camps. He lingered with them until he had full information of their designs. Supposing him to be a United States Government surveyor, and therefore of their party, they freely informed him of all they proposed to do. There was an old red-hot Abolitionist, they told him, named Brown, at Pottawattomie, who was a great hindrance to the success of their plans. He must either be forced to leave the country with his sons, or disposed of in a more summary fashion. If they could only get rid of him victory for their cause seemed certain. Some neighbours of his, the Doyles, Wilkinson, and a Dutchman named Sherman had just been over the border and arranged for an overwhelming force to attack the Browns and their friends, and drive them out.

With this news Brown hurried back, called his friends together, and laid their peril before them. They knew it was no idle boasting, and men with their lives at stake have to find desperate remedies. It was determined that on the first indications of attack, the Doyles, Wilkinson and Sherman should be seized at all hazards, tried by Lynch Law, and, if need be, summarily put to death. It was a terrible decision.

Four days after the sack of Lawrence a Free State man was brutally assaulted in Sherman's store by the

Doyles and others. Their blood once up, they proceeded to Brown's house—he was away at the time—and offered the grossest indignities to his daughter and daughter-in-law. As they left they shouted: "Tell your men that if they don't leave right off, we will come to-morrow and kill them." It was likely enough. Forewarned was to be forearmed. The following night these ruffians were taken out of their houses, tried by Lynch Law, and put to death on the spot.

Long afterwards, John Brown, junr., wrote:—"It has never been asserted by me, nor by anyone else who comprehended the situation at that time, that the killing of those men at Pottawattomie was *wholly* on account of the emergency in that neighbourhood. That blow was struck for Kansas and the slave; and he who attempts to limit its object to a mere settlement of accounts with a few pro-slavery desperadoes on that creek shows himself incapable of rendering a just judgment in the case."

The details of this terrible deed are still somewhat shrouded in mystery, and the exact part John Brown took in it has long been matter of keen dispute. One recorder says: "They were tried, made confession, allowed time to pray, and then slain in a second." Without doubt the deed was applauded both at the time and subsequently by many Free State men as an act of righteous retribution. And whilst, on the one hand, men suffering from intense provocation and a sense of bitter wrong and extreme peril, are not unbiassed judges in their own cause,

it is, on the other hand, difficult for those who sit at peace in their homes to realise what it means to be in the position of having to take another's life or lose your own. The partisans of the victims charged Brown with the act and loudly vowed vengeance. Webb says, though apparently on doubtful authority, that "Brown was at Middle Creek that night, twenty-five miles away, and did not know what had occurred till next day." Mr R. J. Hinton, for a long time special correspondent of the *Boston Traveller*, in Kansas, wrote to that paper that Brown was not a "participator" in the homicides. On the other hand, Mr F. B. Sanborn, after carefully sifting all the evidence available—much of which was not open to Webb—decides that Brown's was the head which devised, although not the hand which performed, what Brown regarded as a stern act of justice, in accomplishing which he became the instrument of Heaven. And Messrs Nicolay and Hay concur in Sanborn's conclusions.

Brown's motives and conduct are probably best shown in a statement published in the *Kansas Memorial* of 1879 by E. A. Coleman, an old Kansas settler, since confirmed in a letter sent by him to Sanborn in 1885. His statement is as follows: "John Brown frequently visited my house and stayed with me. In fact, my latch-string was always out for such men. John Brown knew where his friends lived and could go to them night or day. One evening, not long before the fight at Ossawattomie, we ate supper out of doors in the shade of my cabin at five

o'clock. As soon as supper was over, Captain Brown commenced pacing back and forth in the shade of the house. My wife stood by the dishes, and I sat in my chair. I finally said: 'Captain Brown, I want to ask you one question, and you can answer it or not as you please, and I shall not be offended.' He stopped his pacing, looked me square in the face, and said, 'What is it?' Said I, 'Captain Brown, did you kill those five men on the Pottawattomie, or did you not?' He replied, 'I did not, but I do not pretend to say they were not killed by my order, and in doing so I believe I was doing God's service.' My wife spoke and said, 'Then, Captain, you think that God uses you as an instrument in His hands to kill men?' Brown replied, 'I think He has used me as an instrument to kill men, and if I live I think He will use me as an instrument to kill a good many more.'"

Coleman added in his letter of 1885: "The Browns were hunted as we hunt wolves to-day; and because they undertook to protect themselves they are called cold-blooded murderers, merely because they 'had the dare,' and were contented to live and die as God intended them to. Brown was a Bible-man—he believed it all; and though I am not, I give him credit for being honest, and the most consistent so-called Christian I have ever met."

John Brown, junr., said: "The only statement that I ever heard my father make in regard to this was, 'I did not myself kill any of those men at

Pottawattomie, but I am as fully responsible as if I did.'" And he adds, "I have yet to learn of any authentic statement made by him touching this matter which in substance differs from his words as I have given them."

At the time the responsibility was undoubtedly placed at Brown's door, and a body of men set out from Westport, Missouri, under Henry Pate, to capture him and his party. Mr Redpath was in Lawrence when these troops passed through, and learning their destination he hurried on to warn Brown of his danger. Although he was challenged and delayed by the troops, and had his horse stolen at night, he succeeded in getting a message delivered to Brown before the Missourians could reach Pottawattomie.

He thus describes the state of the country: "I found that, in this region, when men went out to plough they always took their rifles with them and tilled in companies of from five to ten; for whenever they attempted to perform their work separately, the Georgia and Alabama bandits, who were constantly hovering about, were sure to make a sudden descent on them and carry off their horses and oxen. Every man went armed to the teeth. Guard was kept both night and day. Whenever two men approached each other, they came up pistol in hand, and the first salutation invariably was, 'Free State or pro-slave?' or its equivalent in intent, 'Whar ye from?' It not unfrequently happened that the next sound was the report of a pistol."

Brown and his sons were now practically outlaws, and they took to the woods, leading the life of David and his Adullamites. Their homes were plundered and burned, and their cattle driven away. A few of the braver, not to say fiercer, spirits threw in their lot with them, and they speedily became a terror to the marauding bands from over the border. Their manner of life cannot be better indicated than by the description Redpath gives of his first meeting with them.

"The creeks of Kansas are all fringed with wood. I lost my way, or got off the path that crosses the creek above alluded to, when, suddenly, thirty paces before me, I saw a wild-looking man of fine proportions, with half a dozen pistols of various sizes stuck in his belt and a large Arkansas bowie-knife prominent among them. His head was uncovered; his hair was uncombed; his face had not been shaved for many months. We were similarly dressed — with red-topped boots worn over the pantaloons, a coarse blue shirt and a pistol-belt. This was the usual fashion of the times. 'Hullo!' he cried, 'you're in our camp!' He had nothing in his right hand — he carried a water-pail in his left; but before he could speak again I had drawn and cocked my eight-inch Colt.

"I only answered in emphatic tones, 'Halt! or I'll fire!'

"He stopped and said he knew me; that he had seen me in Lawrence, and that I was true; that he was Frederick Brown, the son of old John Brown;

and that I was now within the limits of their camp. After a parley of a few minutes I was satisfied that I was among friends, put up my pistol and shook hands with Frederick.

"He talked wildly as he walked before me, turning round every minute as he spoke of the then recent affair of Pottawattomie. His family, he said, had been accused of it; he denied it indignantly, with the wild air of a maniac. His excitement was so great that he repeatedly re-crossed the creek, until, getting anxious to reach the camp, I refused to listen to him till he took me to his father. He then quietly filled his pail with water, and, after many strange turnings, led me into camp. As we approached it we were twice challenged by sentries who suddenly appeared before trees, and as suddenly disappeared behind them.

"I shall not soon forget the scene that here opened to my view. Near the edge of the creek a dozen horses were tied, all ready saddled for a ride for life, or a hunt after Southern invaders. A dozen rifles and sabres were stacked against the trees. In an open space, amid the shady and lofty woods, there was a great blazing fire with a pot on it; a woman, bare-headed, with an honest sunburnt face, was picking blackberries from the bushes; three or four armed men were lying on red and blue blankets on the grass; and two fine-looking youths were standing, leaning on their arms, on guard near by.

"One of them was the youngest son of old Brown, and the other was 'Charley,' the brave Hungarian who was subsequently murdered at Ossawattomie. Old Brown himself stood near the fire, with his shirt sleeves rolled up and a large piece of pork in his hand. He was cooking a pig. He was poorly clad, and his toes protruded from his boots. The old man received me with great cordiality, and the little band gathered about me. But it was for a moment only, for the Captain ordered them to renew their work. He respectfully but firmly forbade conversation on the Pottawattomie affair; and said that if I desired any information from the company in relation to their conduct or intentions, he, as their captain, would answer for them whatever was proper to communicate.

"In this camp no manner of profane language was permitted; no man of immoral character was allowed to stay, except as a prisoner of war. He made prayers, in which all the company united, every morning and evening; and no food was ever tasted by his men until the Divine blessing had been asked on it. After every meal thanks was returned to the Bountiful Giver. Often, I was told, the old man would retire to the densest solitudes, to wrestle with God in his secret prayer. One of his company subsequently informed me that, after these retirings, he would say that the Lord had directed him in visions what to do; that, for himself, he did not love warfare, but peace—only acting in obedience to the will of the Lord, and fighting God's battles for His children's sake.

"It was at this time that the old man said to me: 'I would rather have the smallpox, yellow fever and cholera all together in my camp, than a man without principles. It's a mistake, sir,' he continued, 'that our people make, when they think that bullies are the best fighters, or that they are the men fit to oppose these Southerners. Give me men of good principles, God-fearing men, who respect themselves, and with a dozen of them I will oppose any hundred such men as those Buford ruffians.'*

"I remained in the camp about an hour. Never before had I met such a band of men. They were not earnest, but earnestness incarnate. Six of them were John Brown's sons."

A short time after this, Brown's two sons, John and Jason, whilst cultivating their desolated farmsteads, were taken prisoners by Pate and a party of Missourians. They were charged with murder—a charge on which they were never brought to trial—put in irons, and treated with the greatest barbarity and cruelty. After being joined by Captain Wood's company of United States dragoons, Pate burned several houses of Free State men, including the house and library of John Brown, junr. The two brothers, handed over to the dragoons, were driven like cattle before the soldiers for twenty-five miles, and subjected

* *Cf.* Cromwell's statement to the second Protectorate Parliament: —"I raised such men as had the fear of God before them, as made some conscience of what they did."—Carlyle's *Cromwell.* Vol. V. p. 13.

to constant indignities, until John's reason gave way and he became a raving maniac. Another day, with their hands tied tightly behind them, so tightly that the cords cut into the flesh, they were driven thirty miles, with no food from morning to night. Jason obtained his freedom at the end of a month, but John was detained for four months, without the semblance of a trial.

It was on 30th May that Brown's two sons were captured. The next day Pate separated from the dragoons and pursued his career of plunder. On 2nd June Brown, who had been eagerly searching for his sons, heard that Pate was encamped at Black Jack, four or five miles away. Brown had but nine men of his own party with him at the time, but when Shore joined him with nineteen mounted men, he resolved to attack at once. The Missourians, sixty strong, had a good defensive position, with a line of waggons in front, and protected by a ravine in the rear.

Brown disposed his men over as much ground as possible, in sheltered positions. For a long time they appeared to make no impression upon the enemy. But by-and-by as man after man fell wounded, first one and then another of Pate's men glided down the ravine until they were out of range, when they mounted their horses and rode away. After three hours Pate's courage failed and he sent out a flag of truce. Brown summoned Pate himself, declining to treat with any other. Redpath says, Pate began informing Brown that he was an officer under the U. S.

marshal, and that he did not suppose they would continue to fight him when they knew that fact.

Brown stopped him with,—

"Captain, I understand exactly what you are, and do not want to hear more about it. Have you any proposition to make to me?"

"Well, no; that is—"

"Very well, Captain," interrupted Brown, "I have one to make to you — your unconditional surrender."

Twenty-one men, in addition to the wounded, surrendered to Brown's party, of whom only nine were then in sight. Much stolen property was found, arms, horses, mules, store-goods, all taken from Free State men, besides waggons, ammunition and camp equipages of a much better quality than Brown's men were able to obtain. No one was killed during the skirmish, and only three of Brown's party were wounded, one being his son-in-law, Henry Thompson. The wounded Missourians were carefully tended, and after a serious admonition for their future better behaviour were sent home.

In spite of Pate's cruelty to John and Jason Brown only a few days previously, he was well treated, and after a brief detention was handed over, with all the spoils, to Colonel Sumner of the U. S. army, who, acting under the proclamation of Governor Shannon, was dispersing all military organisations "without regard to party, names, or distinctions." But the Colonel proved too rigidly impartial to please the Missourians. He dispersed their bands, and placed

bodies of troops along the borders to prevent further incursions. "The Missourians were perfectly satisfied," he wrote, "so long as the troops were employed against the Free State party; but when they found that I would be strictly impartial, that lawless mobs could no longer come from Missouri, and that their interference with the affairs of Kansas was brought to an end, then they immediately raised a hue and cry that they were oppressed by the U. S. troops." Their complaints had the usual effect upon President Pierce. Colonel Sumner was superseded, and Governor Shannon was removed a few weeks afterwards. This left Secretary Woodson Acting-Governor, a willing tool in the hands of the conspirators, who began again unchecked their career of plunder.

On 7th June Brown's little town of Ossawattomie was sacked by 170 Missourians. The local accounts tell of frightful barbarities. Bodies of murdered men were left hanging in trees, or lying rotting on the prairies, a prey to wolves. Next month, when the Eastern States were celebrating the establishment of their "glorious Republic," the Free State Legislature at Topeka was broken up by U. S. troops, and the slavery party seemed to have gained finally the ascendency.

As Redpath puts it: "This was the culmination of Southern success. The Missouri River was now closed against Northern immigration, the roads were literally strewed with dead bodies; the entire Free State population of Leavenworth had been driven

from their homes; almost every part of Kansas was in the power of the invaders; the army and the Government, Federal and Territorial, the bench and the jury box, were in the hands of the oppressor, and our State organisation had been destroyed by the dragoons."

But the old Puritan spirit is not easily crushed. The Free State men rose with desperate courage to meet the dangers threatening to overwhelm them, and with as patriotic a motive as ever actuated a body of men fighting for freedom, they resolved to continue the unequal struggle. In two directions there soon appeared rifts in the dark clouds. At Topeka 800 men rallied together under Aaron D. Stevens—afterwards closely associated with John Brown—and help was slowly approaching from another quarter. "General" James Lane—at a later period Senator for Kansas—had collected a small army and was coming to the relief of the hard-pressed Free-soilers. Brown, after conducting his wounded son-in-law to safety in Iowa, joined Lane, and took command of a small company of mounted men. Fresh atrocities committed by the Missourians inflamed passion still more, and forced even the hesitating to take up arms against them. Major Hoyt was mutilated, a Mr Hopps was scalped, and a lady outraged. None was safe who would not declare outright for slavery. Brown moved towards Rock Creek to capture the murderers of Major Hoyt, and fell upon a camp of 160 invaders. The united companies of Brown, Shore and "Preacher Steward"—

"the fighting preacher" as he was called—numbered only sixty men. A surprise attack instantly delivered defeated the marauders in a few minutes, the victors killing two men, capturing thirteen others, and securing twenty-nine horses, three waggon-loads of provisions, and 100 stand of arms. The stories carried over the border by the defeated men roused the anger of the Missourians still further, and 2000 men quickly assembled to crush the Free men once for all. This was the third organised military invasion of Kansas.

They divided into two companies, one being led by Senator Atchison, the other by "General" Reid. Atchison and his men fled precipitately on the approach of Lane, whilst Reid marched straight on Ossawattomie, the head centre of the hated Brown, who was there waiting to receive him. We cannot do better than describe what followed in his own modest words, just premising that the enemy was about 500 strong, was armed with U. S. muskets, bayonets and revolvers, and had several pieces of cannon.

"Early in the morning of the 30th of August, the enemy's scouts approached to within a mile and a half of the western boundary of the town of Ossawattomie. At this place my son Frederick, who was not attached to my force, had lodged with some four other young men from Lawrence, and a young man named Garrison from Middle Creek.

"The scouts, led by a pro-slavery preacher named White, shot my son dead in the road, whilst he, as I have since ascertained, supposed them to be friendly. At the same time they butchered Mr Garrison, and badly mangled one of the young men from Lawrence who came with my son, leaving him for dead.

"This was not far from sunrise. I had stopped during the night about two and a half miles from them, and nearly one mile from Ossawattomie. I had no organised force, but only some twelve or fifteen new recruits, who were ordered to leave their preparations for breakfast and follow me into the town as soon as this news was brought to me.

"As I had no means of learning correctly the force of the enemy, I placed twelve of the recruits in a log-house, hoping we might be able to defend the town. I then gathered some fifteen more men together, whom we armed with guns, and we started in the direction of the enemy. After going a few rods, we could see them approaching the town in line of battle, about half a mile off, upon a hill west of the village. I then gave up all idea of doing more than to annoy, from the timber near the town, into which we all retreated, and which was filled with a thick growth of underbush, but had no time to recall the twelve men in the log-house, so lost their assistance in the fight.

"At the point above named I met with Captain Clive, a very active young man, who had with him

some twelve or fifteen mounted men, and persuaded him to go with us into the timber on the southern side of the Osage, or Marais des Cygnes, a little to the north-west from the village. Here the men, numbering not more than thirty in all, were directed to scatter and secrete themselves as well as they could, and await the approach of the enemy. This was done in full view of them, who must have seen the whole movement, and had to be done in the utmost haste. I believe Captain Clive and some of his men were not even dismounted in the fight, but cannot assert positively. When the left wing of the enemy had approached to within common rifle shot we commenced firing, and very soon threw the northern branch of the enemy's line into disorder. This continued some fifteen or twenty minutes, which gave us an uncommon opportunity to annoy them. Captain Clive and his men soon got out of ammunition and retired across the river.

"After the enemy rallied, we kept up our fire; until, by the leaving of one and another, we had but six or seven left. We then retired across the river.

"We had one man killed—a Mr Powers, from Captain Clive's company—in the fight. One of my men, a Mr Partridge, was shot in crossing the river. Two or three of the party who took part in the fight are yet missing, and may be lost or taken prisoners. Two were wounded, viz., Dr Updegraff and a Mr Collis.

"I cannot speak in too high terms of them, and of many others I have not now time to mention.

"One of my best men, together with myself, was struck with a partially-spent ball from the enemy in the commencement of the fight, but we were only bruised. . . . The loss of the enemy, as we learn by the different statements of our own as well as their people, was some thirty-one or two killed, and from forty to fifty wounded. After burning the town to ashes, and killing a Mr Williams they had taken, whom neither party claimed, they took a hasty leave, carrying their dead and wounded with them. They did not attempt to cross the river, nor to search for us, and have not since returned to look over their work.

"I give this in great haste, in the midst of constant interruptions. My second son was with me in the fight, and escaped unharmed. This I mention for the benefit of his friends.

"Old Preacher White, I hear, boasts of having killed my son. Of course he is a lion.

"JOHN BROWN.

"LAWRENCE, KANSAS, *7th September* 1856."

From this time he was known as "Ossawattomie Brown."*

The Missourians boasted they had achieved a

* A marble monument was erected at Ossawattomie in 1877, bearing this record: "This inscription is also in commemoration of the heroism of Captain John Brown, who commanded at the battle of Ossawattomie, 30th August 1856, who died and conquered American slavery at Charlestown, Va., 2nd December 1859.

great victory. But three large waggons loaded with dead and wounded as the result of their exploits considerably damped their martial ardour, and Brown's name carried with it an additional terror among men who were thirsting for his blood. Determined as he was in the fight, the tender humanity of the man was never obliterated, and it comes as a ray of sunshine after a terrible storm to learn that out of his poverty he carefully supported the widow of a pro-slavery man who was killed during the proceedings, until her friends came to take her away.

Jason, his second son, relates in a letter a similar experience. The only incident which gave him any real satisfaction was, he says, attending to a wounded Southerner.

"As I was sitting by his bed, and saw the tears flowing from a heart full of sorrow and trouble, alone among strangers and far from home, I thought this: 'If these are some of the things which make war glorious and honourable, deliver me from the honours of war!' In a moment more I was suddenly called away to defend my own life, and probably to do more of such work. I would rather have had the real good it did me then, to care as best I could for a few hours for a misguided, dying enemy, than to have all the glory ever gained by the proudest and most successful warrior that ever shook the earth with the thunder of his guns and the tread of his mighty armies."

Meanwhile a new Governor was daily expected. The Presidential election of 1856 being near at hand, President Pierce had felt himself unable to accede to the wishes of his pro-slavery friends and appoint Secretary Woodson Governor. So flagrant a partisan job might be injurious to the prospects of his party, and what he would not do for justice he did for love of office. Therefore John W. Geary was appointed, a man of character, capacity and experience, of too independent a spirit to be the cat's-paw of any faction. Quickly ascertaining the mettle of the man they had to deal with, the Missourians denounced him before his arrival. In one of their inflammatory appeals they said, after describing the kind of man they wanted: "In his stead we have one appointed who is ignorant of our condition, a stranger to our people; who, we have too much cause to fear, will, if no worse, prove no more efficient to protect us than his predecessors. . . . We cannot await the convenience in coming of our newly-appointed governor. We cannot hazard a second edition of imbecility or corruption." *

This appointment supplied a powerful reason why they should settle the question before his arrival. Therefore, with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause, they proceeded at once to attempt it.

On Sunday afternoon, 14th September, word was brought to Lawrence that both Atchison and Reid were approaching to attack the town with a large force. Smoking homesteads soon pointed out the

* Quoted by Nicolay and Hay.

advance of the invaders. Two hundred men were all that could be mustered for the defence, whilst the enemy numbered ten times as many. Brown was in Lawrence, and was unanimously elected commander. Mounted on a packing case in front of the post-office, he addressed the townspeople as follows:—

"Gentlemen, it is said there are 2500 Missourians down at Franklin, and that they will be here in two hours. You can see for yourselves the smoke they are making by setting fire to the houses in that town. This is probably the last opportunity you will have of seeing a fight, so that you had better do your best. If they should come up and attack us, don't yell and make a great noise, but remain perfectly silent and still. Wait till they get within twenty-five yards of you; get a good object, be sure you see the hind sight of your gun, then fire. A great deal of powder and lead and very precious time is wasted by shooting too high. You had better aim at their legs than at their heads. In either case, be sure of the hind sight of your gun. It is from this reason that I myself have so many times escaped; for if all the bullets which have ever been aimed at me had hit me, I would have been as full of holes as a riddle."

Posting his men behind some breastworks, and in one or two half-finished churches, Brown prepared to receive the enemy. About five o'clock the advance guard of 400 horsemen appeared in sight of the town, about two miles

to the south, where they halted. Brown at once ordered out the hundred men armed with rifles and marched half a mile into the prairie, placing his men about three paces apart. Later he moved them to a small piece of rising ground to the left, where he ordered them to lie down. The Missourians faced towards him, and in a short time the opposing parties were only separated by a ten-acre field of Indian corn. Firing commenced in earnest, but had not long continued before a panic seized the Missourians, and they fled.

"That night," wrote one who was present, "T. and I took our blankets, and lay down immediately within the breastwork, with a stone for our pillow and the clouds for a covering. We had been here for a few minutes only when Captain Brown came along, and said, 'With your permission I will be the third one to aid in defending this fortification to-night.' He then lay down by our side, and told us of the trials and wars he had passed through; that he had settled in Kansas with a large family, having with him six full-grown sons; that he had taken a claim in Lykins County, and was attending peacefully to the duties of husbandry when the hordes came over from Missouri, took possession of the ballot boxes, destroyed his corn, stole his horses, shot down his cattle, sheep and hogs, and repeatedly threatened to shoot, hang or

burn him if he did not leave the Territory; that many times they endeavoured to put their threats in force, but were as often prevented by the eternal vigilance which he found to be the price of safety to himself and his family; that they afterwards did kill and murder one of his sons in cold blood, in his own hearing, and almost in his own sight; and all because he hated slavery! He told me that he held that promising son in his arms as he drew his last breath, and thought of the resemblance he bore to his mother."

The morning dawned to find Lawrence free once more from its enemies, they having retired to a safe distance during the night.

Governor Geary, hearing at Lecompton of the attack on Lawrence, hastened there with three hundred U. S. dragoons, and a battery of light artillery. Placing his troops between the contending parties, he went first to the Missourian camp, and by a mixture of entreaty and warning —backed by the significant statement of Colonel Cook that it would be his duty to support the Governor "at the cannon's mouth"—he persuaded Atchison and his men to be mustered out and to return to their homes. By this prompt and decisive action Governor Geary brought the prolonged guerrilla warfare to an end—for the time—and by the close of September was able to report to Washington "peace now reigns in Kansas."

But he soon found his zeal was too great to be

welcome at Washington. He failed to serve the partisan interest best loved of those who had charge of the central Government. In November 1856 Buchanan was elected President, a new lease of life and power was before the Democrats, and Geary no longer served their purpose. Within six months of his appointment, although he had restored peace to a bleeding community, and had begun to enforce law where lawlessness had so long prevailed, he, to quote Nicolay and Hay, "the third Democratic Governor of Kansas was, like his predecessors, in secret and ignoble flight from the province he had so trustfully come to rule, contemned and execrated by his party associates, abandoned and disgraced by the administration which had appointed him, and without protection to guard him from the assault of the highwayman or assassin."

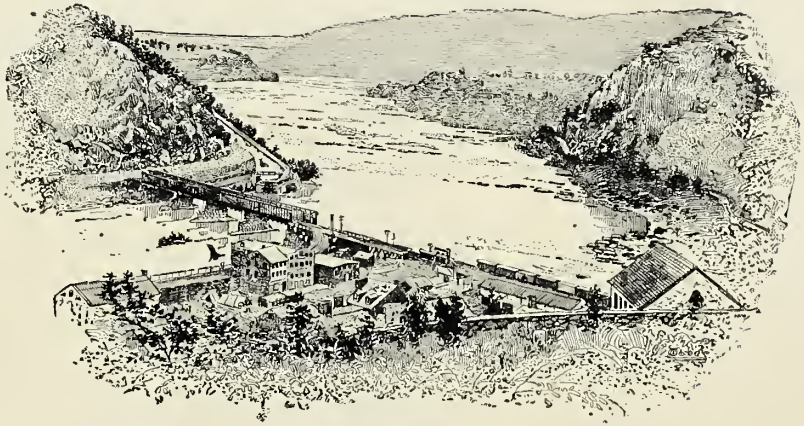
In a "Farewell address to the people of Kansas," dated 12th March 1857, the retiring Governor wrote: "I reached Kansas, and entered upon the discharge of my official duties in the most gloomy hour of her history. Desolation and ruin reigned on every hand; homes and firesides were deserted; the smoke of burning dwellings darkened the atmosphere; women and children, driven from their habitations, wandered over the prairies and among the woodlands, or sought refuge and protection even among the Indian tribes. The highways were infested with numerous predatory bands, and the towns were fortified and garrisoned

by armies of conflicting partisans, each excited almost to frenzy, and determined upon mutual extermination. Such was, without exaggeration, the condition of the Territory at this period."

A Commission appointed three years later to take evidence on oath of the effects of these wars in Kansas reported as follows:—"Amount of crops destroyed, 37,349 dollars; number of buildings burned and destroyed, seventy-eight; horses taken or destroyed, 368; cattle taken or destroyed, 533. Amount of property owned by pro-slavery men, 77,198 dollars; property owned by Free State men, 335,779 dollars; property taken or destroyed by pro-slavery men, 318,718 dollars; property taken or destroyed by Free State men, 94,529 dollars." On the loss of life they reported that it "probably exceeded rather than fell short of 200." They estimated that the entire loss and destruction of property, including the fitting out of the various expeditions, amounted to not less than 2,000,000 dollars. Fully one half of this loss was borne by the actual settlers in Kansas. "But the half of what was done by either party was never chronicled."

Early in October, Brown, worn out with his heavy labours and privations, left Kansas for a period of rest, but with a view also of securing financial help from friends in the East for the more successful prosecution of the crusade. He further hoped to obtain the assistance of some skilled men to act as leaders of the Free-soilers. Narrowly escaping capture by a band

of soldiers who were seeking to arrest him, he passed through Nebraska and returned to the East. His last act on quitting Kansas was to hide an escaped slave in his waggon, and assist him to freedom.



HARPER'S FERRY, LOOKING DOWN THE POTOMAC, FROM THE HILL ABOVE THE TOWN.

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CHAPTER VII

TO THE EAST AND CANADA

AFTER resting with his sons for several weeks at Tabor, Iowa, our hero undertook a series of journeys through the Eastern States, attempting to rouse the people to a sense of the gigantic importance of the slavery struggle, and asking for money to conduct active operations in Kansas.

How or when his actual decision was taken to attack Harper's Ferry it is practically impossible to say. There are indications that it was frequently before his mind this year, as a possible eventuality. Therefore some have suggested that he obtained money under false pretences, saying publicly that he desired it for Kansas, whilst he was fully determined to use it for a different purpose. But it cannot, we think, be said that the charge has been sustained. He undoubtedly practised secrecy as to his plans almost habitually; as what reformer who appealed to the sword did not, of necessity, in his time? But nothing we know of him would lead us to the conclusion that he was capable of committing so gross a breach of faith as this charge implies. The chief evidence produced in support

of it is the order he gave, early in the year, for the manufacture of 1000 pikes at Collinsville, Connecticut. The merchant from whom he ordered them gave the following account of the transaction.

"In the latter part of February, or the early part of March, 1857, old Brown, as he is familiarly called, came to Collinsville to visit his relatives, and, by invitation, addressed the inhabitants at a public meeting. At the close of it, or on the following day, he exhibited some weapons which he claimed to have taken from Captain H. C. Pate, at the battle of Black Jack. Among others was a bowie-knife or dirk, having a blade about eight inches long. Brown remarked that such an instrument, fixed on the end of a pole about six feet long, would be a capital weapon to place in the hands of the settlers in Kansas, to keep in their cabins to defend themselves against 'Border Ruffians or wild beasts'; and asked me what it would cost for 1000. I replied that I would make them for one dollar each; not thinking that it would lead to a contract, or that such an instrument would ever be wanted, or put to use in any way if made. But, to my surprise, he drew up a contract for 1000, to be completed within three months; he agreeing to pay me 500 dollars in thirty days, and the balance within thirty days thereafter."

Brown was unable in the time specified to fulfil

his part of the contract, through lack of funds and the pikes remained uncompleted. In June 1859—after the Kansas struggle was practically ended, by an enormous majority of the settlers rejecting the Lecompton—or Slave—Constitution—there was no further need for the pikes in Kansas, and Brown by this time was organising a far more ambitious scheme than the defence of log-huts. He paid up the balance of the account from funds obtained for other purposes than Kansas warfare, and had the whole consignment forwarded, in the assumed name of J. Smith & Sons, to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. From thence they were, later in the year, conveyed across country to Harper's Ferry.

Before this time he had issued an appeal to the friends of freedom in the Northern States, as follows:—

"To the Friends of Freedom

"The undersigned, whose individual means were exceedingly limited when he first engaged in the struggle for liberty in Kansas, being now still more destitute, and no less anxious than in times past to continue his efforts to sustain that cause, is induced to make this earnest appeal to the friends of freedom throughout the United States, in the firm belief that his call will not go unheeded.

"I ask all honest lovers of *liberty and human rights, both male and female*, to hold up my hands by contributions of pecuniary aid, either as counties,

cities, towns, villages, societies, churches, or individuals.

"I will endeavour to make a judicious and faithful application of all such means as I may be supplied with. Contributions may be sent in drafts to W. H. D. Calendar, Cashier, State Bank, Hartford, Connecticut. It is my intention to visit as many places as I can during my stay in the States, provided I am informed of the disposition of the inhabitants to aid me in my efforts, as well as to receive my visit. Information may be communicated to me (care of Massasoit House) at Springfield, Massachusetts. Will editors of newspapers friendly to the cause kindly second the measure, and also give this some half-dozen insertions? Will either gentlemen or ladies, or both, volunteer to take up the business? It is with *no little sacrifice of personal feeling* I appear in this manner before the public.

"JOHN BROWN."

In Ohio he seems to have met with little sympathy. The burning zeal which hurried him along was called madness, and he suffered many bitter disappointments. The *Cleveland Herald*, speaking of his visit to that town, said:—"He was so demented as to suppose he could raise a regiment of men in Ohio to march into Missouri to make reprisals against the slave forces, and even asked a friend if the power of the State could not be enlisted in that matter. He was told by many that he was a madman, and the poor man left sorrow-

ing that there was no sympathy here for the oppressed."

His half-brother, Jeremiah, openly stated to the Senate Committee appointed to inquire into the Harper's Ferry business that it was his conviction John was mad. In the course of his evidence he said :—

"My brother John, from my earliest recollection, has been an honest, conscientious man ; and this was his reputation among all who knew him in that section of the country. Since the trouble growing out of the settlement of Kansas Territory, I have observed a marked change in brother John. Previous to this, he devoted himself entirely to business, but he became wholly absorbed by the subject of slavery. He had property left him by his father, of which I had the agency. He has never taken a dollar of it for the benefit of his family, but has called for a portion of it to be expended in what he called *the* service. After his return from Kansas he called on me, and I urged him to go home to his family and attend to his private affairs ; that I feared his course would prove his destruction and that of his boys. This was about two years ago. He replied that he was sorry that I did not sympathise with him ; that *he knew he was in the line of his duty and he must pursue it though it should destroy him and his family.* He stated to me that he was satisfied that he was a chosen instrument in the hands of God to war against slavery. From his manner, and from his conversation at the time, I had no doubt he had

become insane upon the subject of slavery, and I gave him to understand that this was my opinion of him."

At Boston his visit stirred the whole community, and an agitation was set on foot to induce the Massachusetts Legislature to vote 10,000 dollars for the defence of the Kansas Free-soilers. A committee was appointed to receive evidence and petitions in favour of the proposal. It held sittings in public, and on 18th Febuary 1857 John Brown appeared before it to read his statement of what he had seen in Kansas. The many little touches of autobiography it contains make it now a very interesting document.

He said: "In the fall of 1855, I, with four of my sons, was called out, and travelled, mostly on foot and during the night, to help to defend Lawrence, a distance of thirty-five miles, where we were detained with some 1500 others, or thereabouts, from five to ten days—say an average of ten days—at a cost of not less than a dollar and a half per day as wages; to say nothing of the actual loss and suffering occasioned to many of them by leaving their families sick, their crops not secured, their houses unprepared for winter, and many without houses at all. This was the case with myself and sons, who could not get houses built after returning. . . . I, with six sons and a son-in-law, was called out, and travelled most of the way on foot, to try and save Lawrence, May 20 and 21, and much of the way in the night. . . . From about 20th May, hundreds of men, like ourselves, lost their whole time, and

entirely failed of securing any kind of crops whatever."

The loss of time alone he put at 90,000 dollars. "On or about the 20th of May, two of my sons, with several others, were imprisoned without other crime than opposition to bogus legislation, and most barbarously treated for a time, one being held about a month, the other about four months. Both had their families on the ground. After this both of them had their houses burned, and all their goods consumed by the Missourians. In this burning all the eight suffered. One had his oxen stolen in addition."

Here he laid down his paper to tell of the chains —then in his possession—with which his son had been loaded, and his eye flashed fire as he said the tortures to which his son was subjected had made him "a maniac, yes, a maniac." Wiping away an involuntary tear, he continued:—

"At Black Jack the invading Missourians wounded three Free State men, one of whom was my son-in-law, and a few days afterwards one of my sons was so wounded that he will be a cripple for life. . . . I saw the ruins of many Free State men's houses in different parts of the Territory, together with grain in the stack, burning, and wasted in other ways, to the amount of at least 50,000 dollars. . . . I know that for a considerable time the mails on different routes were entirely stopped; and notwithstanding there were abundant troops in the Territory to escort the mails, I know that such escorts

were not furnished as they ought to have been. . . . In September last I visited a little Free State town called Staunton, on the north side of the Osage, from which every inhabitant had fled for fear of their lives, even after having built a strong log-house, or wooden fort, at a heavy expense, for their protection. Many of them had left their effects, liable to be destroyed or carried off, not being able to remove them. This was to me a most gloomy scene, and like a visit to a sepulchre. Deserted houses and cornfields were to be found in almost every direction south of the Kansas River.

"I once saw three mangled bodies, two of which were dead, and one alive, but with twenty bullet and buck-shot holes in him, after the two murdered men had lain on the ground, to be worked at by flies for some eighteen hours. One of these young men was my own son."

Here he completely broke down in his narrative, vainly striving to suppress the emotion which would have way. Resuming:—

"I saw Mr Parker, whom I well knew, all bruised about the head, and with his throat partly cut, after he had been dragged, sick, from the house of Ottawa Jones, and thrown over the bank of the Ottawa Creek for dead. About the 1st of September, I and five sick and wounded sons and a son-in-law were obliged to lie on the ground, without shelter, for a considerable time, and at times almost in a state of starving, and dependent on the charity of the Christian Indian I have before named (Ottawa Jones) and his wife."

Asked if he knew anything of Buford's men—that is the body of Georgia and Alabama bandits under Colonel Buford, who figured very prominently in the attacks on the Free State men in Kansas—he told how, acting as a surveyor, he had entered their camp and ascertained their plans. They said Kansas must be a Slave State to save Missouri from Abolition; that both must stand or fall together. They did not hesitate to threaten that they would burn, kill, scalp and drive out the entire Free State population of the Territory, if it was necessary to do so to accomplish their object.

In answer to the inquiry who commanded the Free State men at the last attack on Lawrence, he characteristically gave praise to everyone except himself, but when pressed for a definite answer, replied: "No one. He was asked to take command but refused, and only acted as their adviser." He concluded: "We want good men, industrious men, men who respect themselves, who act only from the dictates of conscience—*men who fear God too much to fear anything human.*"

His personal appearance at this time is thus described by one who met him frequently. "His brown coat of the fashion of ten years before, his waistcoat buttoning nearly to the throat, and his wide trousers, gave him the look of a well-to-do farmer in his Sunday dress; while his patent leather stock, grey surtout, and fur cap, added a military air to his figure. At this time he wore no beard." A favourite expression of his, noted by many during

this visit, was—"I believe in the Golden Rule, sir, and the Declaration of Independence. I think they both mean the same thing; and it is better that a whole generation should pass off the face of the earth—men, women and children — by a violent death, than that one jot of either should fail in this country. I mean exactly *so*, sir."

He visited Concord, and made the acquaintance of Emerson and Thoreau, impressing both deeply with his strong personality. Emerson described him as the truest hero-man he had ever met, and speaking in Tremont Temple, Boston, at a meeting held to provide measures of relief for Brown's family, said:—

"As for Captain Brown himself, he is so transparent that all men can see through him. He is a man to make himself felt wherever in the world courage and integrity are esteemed, the rarest of heroes, and yet a pure idealist. Everyone who has heard him speak has been impressed alike by his simple and artless goodness and his sublime courage. he joins the high faith of the good man with the revolutionary spirit of his grandfather. He believes in two instruments, the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence. . . . He believes in the Union of American States, and he conceives that the only enemy of Union is slavery, and for this reason, as a patriot, he seeks its abolition. . . . Captain Brown's speeches to the court have interested a nation in him. What artlessness and plainness! If he had interfered in behalf of the great, or

the wealthy, or the wise, he said, no one would have blamed him; but he believed that when he interfered in behalf of a poor and despised people he was doing right. What a favourite will he be in history, which plays such pranks with mere contemporary reputations. Nothing can resist it. If he suffers death, it is plain that he will drag certain official gentlemen into an immortality most undesirable, and of which they have already some disagreeable forebodings. Indeed, it is the resolution of the Governor of Virginia to hang the man who, he says, possesses the greatest integrity, truthfulness and courage that he ever met. Is that the kind of man for whom the gallows is built? No man dare believe that there exists in Virginia another man so worthy to live, as deserving of public and private honours, as this poor prisoner. I said just now that John Brown is an idealist, but he believes in his ideas to such an extent that he laboured to put them all into action. He did not believe in moral suasion, but in putting things through."

After a short visit to his family at North Elba, where he found his two years' absence had obliterated his face and figure from the mind of his little daughter Ellen, he terminated his visits to the New England States, and turned his face once more westwards. He was disappointed with the results of his visit. There was found among his papers after his death a document which expresses very forcibly his painful surprise at the contrast between the beautiful sentiments so frequently

expressed in the press and on the platform, and the paltry amounts he had obtained to sustain the rights of Free men in Kansas. Popular orators constantly sprinkled their speeches with references to Plymouth Rock, where the first Puritans landed from the *Mayflower*, and to the monument erected on Bunker's Hill. By adding to these *Uncle Tom's Cabin* he appears to suggest that sentiment is well, but action is better. This interesting sheet runs as follows:—

"OLD BROWN'S FAREWELL

TO THE 'PLYMOUTH ROCKS,' 'BUNKER HILL MONUMENTS,' 'CHARTER OAKS,' AND *'Uncle Tom's Cabin.'*

"He has left for Kansas. He has been trying since he came out of the Territory to secure an outfit, or, in other words, the means of arming and thoroughly equipping his regular minute men, who are mixed up with the people of Kansas; and he leaves the States with a feeling of deepest sadness, that, after having exhausted his own small means, and with his family and his brave men suffered hunger, cold, nakedness, and some of them sickness, wounds, imprisonment in irons, with extreme cruel treatment, and others death; that, after lying on the ground for months in the most sickly, unwholesome and uncomfortable places, some of the time with sick and wounded, destitute of any shelter; hunted

like wolves; sustained in part by Indians—that after all this, in order to sustain a cause which every citizen of this 'glorious Republic' is under equal moral obligations to aid, and for the neglect of which he will be held accountable by God—a cause in which every man, woman and child of the entire human family has a deep and awful interest—that, when no wages are asked or expected, he cannot secure, amidst all the wealth, luxury and extravagance of this 'heaven-exalted' people even the necessary supplies of the common soldier. 'How are the mighty fallen!'

"BOSTON, *April*, A.D. 1857."

Now it was that the design of an armed attack upon slavery clearly began to take practical shape in his mind. He endeavoured to form a small military training school at Tabor, Iowa, hoping there to drill a number of young men from Kansas who would follow him to Harper's Ferry. He engaged Hugh Forbes, an ex-Garibaldian captain, a shiftless, dissolute man, to act as drill-instructor. They both arrived in Tabor during August 1857, but had to remain inactive for nearly three months, through lack of funds. He divulged all his plans to Forbes, who, before long, quarrelled with him, first tried to supplant and then betrayed him. This delayed the proposed attack for about a year.

In November Brown left Tabor for Kansas, in a waggon driven by one of his sons. Immediately on

his arrival at Lawrence he approached a number of young Free State men, asking them to join an organised body to stop the depredations of the slave-holders. One of the first to join him was John E. Cook, whose confession after Harper's Ferry furnishes us with some very interesting details. With other young men Cook went to Tabor, where they learned that their ultimate destination was Virginia. Some of them objected, but were finally persuaded to go with the rest. They found clothing, blankets, ammunition, 200 revolvers, and about 200 Sharpe's rifles already provided. Removing to Peder, they remained there during the winter months drilling under Captain Aaron D. Stevens, the leader of the Free State men at Topeka in 1856. "The people of the neighbourhood did not know our purpose," says Cook. "We remained at Peder till about the middle of April 1858, when we left for Chatham, Canada."

Brown's object in going to Canada was to secure the active co-operation of the escaped slaves living there, of whom there were said to be 40,000 at this time. At Chatham, Canada West, he called a secret convention of "true friends of Freedom" in the early part of May, the place of meeting being one of the negro churches. Elder Monroe, a coloured minister, was president, and J. H. Kagi was secretary. Brown submitted to the meeting a lengthy constitution of forty-eight articles. His object was not to run away with slaves to the North, but to emancipate them in the slave-holding States, and by military organisation and defensive operations in the mountains to

maintain them in freedom until the U. S. Legislature should repeal the slavery laws. Therefore he had drawn up a form of provisional government to preserve order among the freed slaves as long as they should need to remain under his control. The preamble to this "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the people of the United States" was as follows:—

"Whereas slavery, throughout its entire existence in the United States, is none other than the most barbarous, unprovoked and unjustifiable war of one portion of its citizens against another portion, the only conditions of which are perpetual imprisonment and hopeless servitude, or absolute extermination; in utter disregard and violation of those eternal and self-evident truths set forth in our Declaration of Independence; therefore we, the citizens of the United States, and the oppressed people who by a recent decision of the Supreme Court are declared to have no rights which the white man is bound to respect, together with all the other people degraded by the laws thereof, do, for the time being, ordain and establish for ourselves the following provisional constitution and ordinances, the better to protect our people, property, lives and liberties, and to govern our actions."

The object being not revolution, but slave emancipation, one of the articles, No. 46, expressly stipulated that they did not wish to overthrow the settled government of any State.

"The foregoing articles shall not be construed so as in any way to encourage the overthrow of any State government, or of the general Government of the United States; and we look to no dissolution of the Union, but simply to amendment and repeal; and our flag shall be the same that our fathers fought under in the Revolution."

According to Cook, some forty-four persons signed this document at the convention, the whole of them being black except the few Brown had taken with him. Two days later they met again and unanimously elected Brown commander-in-chief. Some little time previously Brown had fully communicated his plans to a few Abolitionists at the house of Mr Gerrit Smith, Peterboro, New York. Mr F. B. Sanborn was sent by them to interview Brown, who laid before him his provisional constitution and the full details of his proposed operations. They saw the hopelessness of the brave man's crusade, and did their utmost to dissuade him from it. They pointed out that a handful of men such as he might raise could accomplish nothing, and they discounted his anticipations of large accessions from runaway slaves. But all their arguments were wasted. His resolution was firmly fixed. He was called to the work by God and would not turn back. Give a slave a pike and you make him a man. Nat Turner with fifty men held Virginia in terror for five weeks; the same number well organised and armed could shake the system out

of the State. Twenty men in the Alleghanies could break slavery to pieces in two years. "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

So he talked, and so he believed. If he was mad, it was a sublime madness, without the slightest taint of selfishness. The only question for his friends to consider was whether they would help him in his attempt or not. Made it would be, whatever their decision. As Gerrit Smith put it at a private conference: "You see how it is, our dear old friend has made up his mind to this course, and cannot be turned from it. We cannot give him up to die alone, we must support him."

In a letter to Mr Sanborn the day after this conference, Brown showed that he had counted the cost, and was resolved to proceed at all hazards. "I have only had this one opportunity in a life of nearly sixty years. . . . God has honoured but comparatively a very small part of mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards. . . . I expect nothing but to endure hardness, but I expect to effect a mighty conquest, *even though it be like the last victory of Samson.*"

The exact relationships which existed between Brown and the various State Kansas Committees are involved in much obscurity and are difficult to trace. But a few things are clear. Brown accepted the co-operation of any committees who consented to further his plans, but he resolutely refused to be controlled by them. He was both too strong willed

and too clear sighted as to his mission to consent to his movements being ordered by others. At the same time some of them rendered him valuable assistance in money and arms, the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee being the most prominent. Of this committee Mr G. L. Stearns was chairman, Mr Gerrit Smith, treasurer, and Mr F. B. Sanborn—Brown's latest and most voluminous biographer—the secretary. Probably the man of most marked characteristics was Gerrit Smith, a large landowner who did not believe in private property in land and nobly acted up to his principles. A busy man of commerce and a Senator, and of so open a hospitality that his biographer called it "tavernous." Full of the "enthusiasm of humanity" when it was less popular so to be than it is to-day, keen, shrewd, alert, he spared neither time nor money in furthering great causes he believed in, such as Abolition and Prohibition, and at one period contributed for many months in succession 1000 dollars a month to win Kansas for freedom. Other men who in one form or another expressed sympathy with Brown's work were Horace White, afterwards editor of the *Chicago Tribune;* S. P. Chace, Senator for Ohio and subsequently Chief Justice of the United States; W. A. Phillips, afterwards Member of Congress for Kansas and a general in the Northern Army during the Civil War, and the Rev. Dr Theodore Parker, an enthusiastic, wholehearted supporter of Brown.

By 1st May 1858 Mr Stearns had handed over to Brown nearly the whole of the thousand dollars

he had asked for as his special campaign fund, but Forbes now made his disclosures, and many Abolitionists becoming alarmed, it was decided to wait for a more favourable opportunity before taking definite action. This advice was strongly pressed upon Brown by a private committee of the more energetic spirits among the Abolitionists, consisting of Gerrit Smith, Theodore Parker, Dr Howe, Wentworth Higginson, G. L. Stearns, and F. B. Sanborn. To Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley, and several other prominent Abolitionists, although they were in general sympathy with his work, Brown does not seem to have disclosed his plans in their later developments. Frederick Douglass enjoyed his full confidence throughout.

The rifles which had been placed in Brown's hands as the agent of the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee, for the defence of Kansas settlers, had before this date become the personal property of Mr G. L. Stearns, whose contributions had been on a most generous scale. He now placed them in Brown's hands as his personal representative, and for their subsequent use the committee was in no degree responsible.

What Emerson thought of Stearns is shown in the following quotation from the address he delivered at his funeral in 1867:—"We recall the all but exclusive devotion of this excellent man during the last twelve years to public and patriotic interests, known until that time in no very wide circle as a man of skill and perseverance in his business, of pure life,

of retiring and affectionate habits, happy in his domestic relations, his extreme interest in the national politics, then growing more anxious year by year, engaged him to scan the fortunes of freedom with keener attention. He was an early labourer in the resistance to slavery. This brought him into sympathy with the people of Kansas. As early as 1855 the Emigrant Aid Society was formed, and in 1856 he organised the Massachusetts State Kansas Committee, by means of which a large amount of money was obtained for the Free State men at times of the greatest need.

"He was the more engaged to this cause by making, in 1857, the acquaintance of Captain John Brown, who was not only an extraordinary man, but one who had a rare magnetism for men of character, and attached some of the best and noblest to him on very short acquaintance by lasting ties. Mr Stearns made himself at once necessary to Captain Brown as one who respected his inspirations, and had the magnanimity to trust him entirely, and to arm his hands with all needed help. For the relief of Kansas in 1856-57 his own contributions were the largest and the first. He never asked anyone to give so much as he himself gave; and his interest was so manifestly pure and sincere that he easily obtained eager offerings in quarters where other petitioners failed. He did not hesitate to become the banker of his clients, and to furnish them money and arms in advance of the subscriptions which he obtained. His first donations were only

entering wedges of his later; and, unlike other benefactors, he did not give money to excuse his entire preoccupation in his own pursuits, but as an earnest of the dedication of his heart and hand to the interests of the sufferers, a pledge kept until the success he wrought and prayed for was consummated."

CHAPTER VIII

LAST VISIT TO KANSAS

INFLUENCED by the bad news from his sons in Kansas as well as by the necessity for delaying his great project, Brown once more set out for Kansas, taking Kagi with him. During his absence from the Territory the pro-slavery men had continued the usual atrocities with but little intermission. A peculiarly barbarous massacre committed at the farm of Marais des Cygnes* had caused the whole neighbourhood to take up arms, under the leadership of a Mr Montgomery. Brown reached Lawrence on 25th June 1858, when Mr Redpath saw him. Another correspondent, Richard J. Hinton, who met him the same day, thus describes their interview.

"On Sunday I held a very interesting conversation with Captain Brown, which lasted nearly the whole afternoon. The purport of it was, on his part, inquiries as to various public men in the Territory, and the condition of political affairs. He was very particular in his inquiries as to the movements and

* Marsh of the Swans.

character of Captain Montgomery.* The massacre of the Marais des Cygnes was then fresh in the minds of the people. I remember an expression which he used. Warmly giving utterance to my detestation of slavery and its minions, and impatiently wishing for some effectual means of injuring it, Captain Brown said, most impressively: 'Young men must learn to wait. Patience is the hardest lesson to learn. I have waited for twenty years to accomplish my purpose.'"

The next day, 26th June, he started for the South to see his relatives and Captain Montgomery, Kagi accompanying him. They encamped about half a mile from the border, and strongly fortified themselves. Here they were speedily joined by a number of Brown's old friends, and the news spread like wildfire along the countryside that John Brown had returned. They learned it, too, over the border, and checked their incursions. But they were ere long to learn it in a more effectual way. For the first two or three months, Brown, suffering from poor health, remained inactive at the house of his half-sister, Mrs Adair, near Ossawattomie. Here, in September, he was again seen by Mr R. J. Hinton, who wrote as follows †:—

"Captain Brown had been quite unwell, and was then somewhat more impatient and nervous in his manner

* Afterwards colonel of a black regiment in South Carolina during the Civil War.

† *John Brown and His Men*, by R. J. Hinton, p. 671, etc.

than I had before observed. Soon after my arrival he again engaged in conversation as to the various public men in the Territory. Captain Montgomery's name was introduced, and Captain Brown was quite enthusiastic in praise of him, avowing a most perfect confidence in his integrity and purposes. 'Captain Montgomery,' he said, 'is the only soldier I have met among the prominent Kansas men. He understands my system of warfare exactly. He is a natural chieftain and knows how to lead.' Of his own early treatment at the hands of ambitious leaders, to which I had alluded in bitter terms, he said: 'They acted up to their instincts. As politicians, they thought every man wanted to lead, and therefore supposed I might be in the way of their schemes. While they had this feeling of course they opposed me. Many men did not like the manner in which I conducted warfare, and they too opposed me. Committees and councils could not control my movements, therefore they did not like me. But politicians and leaders soon found I had different purposes, and forgot their jealousy. They have been kind to me since. . . . For twenty years I have never made any business arrangement which would prevent me at any time answering the call of the Lord. I have kept my business in such a condition that in two weeks I could always wind up my affairs and be ready to obey the call. I have permitted nothing to be in the way of my duty, neither wife, children, nor worldly goods. Whenever the occasion offered I was ready.' He concluded: 'Young men should have a purpose in

life, and adhere to it through all trials. They would be sure to succeed if their purpose was such as to deserve the blessing of God.'"

The same day, during a walk to the river, Kagi detailed the whole of their plans to Hinton, showing that the seizure of Harper's Ferry was only a preliminary incident of a much wider scheme.

"Harper's Ferry was mentioned as a point to be seized—but not held—on account of the arsenal. The white members of the company were to act as officers of different guerrilla bands, which, under the general command of John Brown, were to be composed of Canadian refugees and the Virginian slaves who would join them. . . . It was not anticipated that the first movement would have any other appearance to the masters than a slave stampede, or local insurrection at most. The planters would pursue their chattels and be defeated. The militia would then be called out, and would also be defeated. It was not intended that the movement should appear to be of large dimensions, but that, gradually increasing in magnitude, it should, as it opened, strike terror into the heart of the Slave States by the amount of organisation it would exhibit, and the strength it gathered. They anticipated after the first blow had been struck that, by the aid of the free and Canadian negroes who would join them, they could inspire confidence in the slaves, and induce them to rally. No intention was expressed of gathering a large body of slaves,

and removing them to Canada. On the contrary, Kagi clearly stated, in answer to my inquiries, that the design was to make the fight in the mountains of Virginia, extending it to North Carolina and Tennessee, and also to the swamps of South Carolina if possible. Their purpose was not the extradition of one or a thousand slaves, but their liberation in the States wherein they were born and were now held in bondage.

"'The mountains and swamps of the South were intended by the Almighty,' said John Brown to me afterwards, 'for a refuge for the slave and a defence against the oppressor.' Kagi spoke of having marked out a chain of counties extending continuously through South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. He had travelled over a large portion of the region indicated, and from his own personal knowledge and with the assistance of Canadian negroes who had escaped from those States, they had arranged a general plan of attack. The counties he named were those which contained the largest proportion of slaves, and would, therefore, be the best in which to strike. The blow struck at Harper's Ferry was to be in the spring, when the planters were busy, and the slaves most needed. The arms in the arsenal were to be taken to the mountains, with such slaves as joined. The telegraph wires were to be cut, and the railroad tracks torn up in all directions. As fast as possible other bands besides the original ones were to be formed, and a continuous chain of posts established

in the mountains. They were to be supported by provisions taken from the farms of the oppressors. They expected to be speedily and constantly reinforced; first, by the arrival of those men who, in Canada, were anxiously looking and praying for the time of deliverance, and then by the slaves themselves. The intention was to hold the egress to the Free States as long as possible, in order to retreat when that was advisable. Kagi, however, expected to retreat southward, not in the contrary direction. The slaves were to be armed with pikes, scythes, muskets, shot-guns, and other simple instruments of defence; the officers, white or black, and such of the men as were skilled and trustworthy, to have the use of the Sharpe's rifles and revolvers. They anticipated procuring provisions enough for subsistence by forage, as also arms, horses and ammunition. Kagi said one of the reasons that induced him to go into the enterprise was a full conviction that at no very distant day forcible efforts for freedom would break out among the slaves, and that slavery might be more speedily abolished by such efforts than by any other means. He knew by observations in the South, that in no point was the system so vulnerable as in its fear of a slave-rising. Believing that such a blow would soon be struck, he wanted to organise it so as to make it more effectual, and also, by directing and controlling the negroes, to prevent some of the atrocities that would necessarily arise from the

sudden upheaving of such a mass as the Southern slaves. The constitution adopted at Chatham was intended as the framework of organisation among the Emancipationists, to enable the leaders to effect a more complete control of their forces. Ignorant men, in fact all men, were more easily managed by the forms of law and organisation than without them. This was one of the purposes to be subserved by the provisional government. Another was to alarm the (slave-holding) oligarchy by discipline and the show of organisation. In their terror they would imagine the whole North was upon them pell-mell, as well as all their slaves. Kagi said John Brown anticipated that, by a system of forbearance to non-slaveholders, many of them might be induced to join them.

"In answer to an inquiry Kagi stated that no politician, in the Republican or any other party, knew of their plans, and but few of the Abolitionists. It was no use talking, he said, of anti-slavery action to non-resistant agitators."

When Hinton exclaimed that "all would be killed," Kagi replied, "Yes, I know it, Hinton, *but the result will be worth the sacrifice.*"

Hinton adds: "I recall my friend as a man of personal beauty, with a fine, well-shaped head, a voice of quiet, sweet tones, that could be penetrating and cutting, too, almost to sharpness. The eyes were remarkable — large, full, well-set beneath strongly-

arched brows. Ordinarily they wore a veiled look, reminding me of a slow-burning fire of heated coals, hidden behind a mica door. Hazel-grey in colour, iridescent in light and effect. The face gave you confidence in the character that had already wrought it into a stern gravity beyond its years. One would trust or turn away at once, according to the purpose sought. Kagi was not a man of expressed enthusiasms; on the contrary, he was cold in manner, and his conclusions were stamped with the approval of his intellect. Mentally, he was the ablest of those who followed John Brown to Harper's Ferry."

Kagi was of Swiss descent. He was an only son, born in Ohio in 1835, so that he was only in his twenty-fifth year when he died. He was called to the Bar in 1856.

The above statements by his secretary may be taken as a fairly accurate account of the scheme for the grand attack upon slavery which had gradually evolved itself in John Brown's mind.

A month later Brown left Ossawattomie, and with a few followers settled at Little Sugar Creek in the far south of Kansas, at a house known as Bain's Cabin. This they so strongly fortified with thick logs as to make it practically impervious to musket balls. A renewal of hostilities was daily expected. In November, during Brown's absence at Ossawattomie, the sheriff collected a force of a hundred men, and marched to Bain's Cabin with the intention

of arresting Brown and his men, and demolishing their forest stronghold. Kagi and Stevens were the only men at home at the moment, but many neighbours rallied quickly to their support, and a messenger having succeeded in bringing Captain Montgomery on the scene with a contingent of his men, the sheriff retired without firing a shot.

But the Missourians were gathering again over the border, and though they quickly withdrew several miles inland on learning that Brown was collecting his men, he resolved to teach them a salutary lesson. He had come to the conclusion that the only way to stop their predatory incursions was to show them that their own State could be invaded, and that they needed to attend to their own defences. While thinking over his method of procedure an occasion presented itself exactly to his mind. On Sunday, 19th December, a negro named Jim came to Brown's cabin in great distress, saying that he, his family and a friend were about to be sold South, and implored Brown to rescue them before it was too late. On the Monday night following, two parties of twelve and eight men, under Brown and Kagi respectively, crossed into Missouri, resolved to liberate as many slaves as they could find. Jim and four others were liberated first by Brown's party, and at the next house they released five more, taking the owner prisoner lest he should raise an alarm. Brown also took some property as wages for the unremunerated labour of the slaves.

These ten persons were liberated without bloodshed.

Kagi's party were not so fortunate. They only succeeded in liberating one slave, whose owner on raising his rifle to fire had been shot dead; an "untoward incident" which marred the success of the joint undertaking. The two parties returned to Kansas without molestation, the liberated slaves being placed in hiding several miles from the border whilst Brown and Kagi returned to Bain's Cabin. The unprecedented boldness of this inroad into Slave Territory spread consternation far and wide, and in a few days not a slave was to be seen in the two border counties of Bates and Vernon. Some, taking advantage of the general confusion, escaped into Kansas, others were sold South, and the remainder were taken into safer keeping than could be found within marching distance of Bain's Cabin. Immediately a price was set on Brown's head, and both the State authorities and the Central Executive tried to effect his capture. But the 3250 dollars conjointly offered by the Governor of Missouri and President Pierce failed to buy a traitor. This action afforded Brown an opportunity of exposing the gross partiality of the authorities, who raised the hue and cry immediately when slaves were in question, but totally neglected to discharge their duties when the murder of a number of Free State men was to be avenged, as at Marais des Cygnes. He stated his case in the following characteristic letter, which appeared in several newspapers.

"TRADING POST,
"KANSAS, *January* 1859.

"GENTLEMEN,—You will greatly oblige a humble friend by allowing the use of your columns while I briefly state two parallels in my poor way.

"Not one year ago, eleven quiet citizens of this neighbourhood, viz., William Robertson, William Colpetzer, Amos Hall, Austin Hall, John Campbell, Asa Snyder, Thomas Stilwell, William Hairgrove, Asa Hairgrove, Patrick Ross, and B. L. Reed were gathered up from their work and their homes by an armed force under one Hamilton, and, without trial or opportunity to speak in their own defence, were formed into line, and, all but one, shot—five killed and five wounded. One fell unharmed, pretending to be dead. All were left for dead. The only crime charged against them was that of being Free State men. Now, I inquire, what action has ever, since the occurrence in May last, been taken by either the President of the United States, the Governor of Missouri, the Governor of Kansas, or any of their tools, or by any pro-slavery or administration man, to ferret out and punish the perpetrators of this crime?

"Now for the other parallel. On Sunday, 19th December, a negro man called Jim came over to the Osage Settlement from Missouri, and stated that he, together with his wife, two children and another negro man, were to be sold within a day or two, and begged for help to get away. On

Monday night following, two small companies were made up to go to Missouri and liberate the five slaves, together with other slaves. One of these companies I assumed to direct. We proceeded to the place, surrounded the buildings, liberated the slaves, and also took certain property supposed to belong to the estate. We, however, learned before leaving that a portion of the articles we had taken belonged to a man living on the plantation as a tenant, who was supposed to have no interest in the estate. We promptly returned to him all we had taken.

"We then went to another plantation, where we found five more slaves, took some property and two white men. We moved all slowly away into the Territory for some distance, and then sent the white men back, telling them to follow us as soon as they chose to do so. The other company freed one female slave, took some property, and, as I am informed, killed one white man (the master), who fought against the liberation.

"Now for a comparison. Eleven persons are forcibly restored to their natural and inalienable rights, with but one man killed, and all 'hell is stirred from beneath.' It is currently reported that the Governor of Missouri has made a requisition upon the Governor of Kansas for the delivery of all such as were concerned in the last-named 'dreadful outrage.' The marshal of Kansas is said to be collecting a posse of Missouri (not Kansas) men at West Point in Missouri, a little

town about ten miles distant, to 'enforce the laws.' All pro-slavery, conservative Free State and dough-face men and administration tools are filled with holy horror.

"Consider the two cases, and the action of the administration party.—Respectfully yours,

"JOHN BROWN."

Shortly after writing the above letter, Brown set out, with his convoy of slaves, on a long and tedious journey of over 2500 miles — through Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan— to Canada. The Fugitive Slave Act was in operation, and every inducement was offered to men with anti-Abolitionist sympathies to secure his arrest. His life was in constant imminent peril, and it is a marvel he got through safely. But his reputation as a stern fighter was so well known, and Dame Rumour, according to her wont, had so exaggerated his prowess, that few dared to interfere with him, and when they did they seemed ever to have one eye on their line of retreat, as will shortly appear.

Brown had now entered upon the last year of his life, and this was his final departure from Kansas. His destiny was calling him on to greater and more perilous deeds, in which he was to obtain the honour of martyrdom for the cause he loved better than life. Could he have lived until January 1861 he would have seen one of the great objects of his life accomplished —for which he had suffered so terribly in his family and person — by the admission of Kansas to the

Union as a Free State, thus ending, once for all, the border conflict. Probably to him, more than to any other man, Kansas is indebted for her clean record on the slavery question.

His departure was delayed for a few days at Ossawattomie by the birth of a little negro boy, who was exultingly named "Captain John Brown." Once started on the journey, constant care and vigilance were necessary, and great must have been the strain upon both the physical, mental and moral resources of the leader of the little band. But though enemies were numerous, friends also were to be found, who ungrudgingly assisted the enterprise. Webb quotes a letter to Mrs Child, the authoress, from a settler who rode with Brown the first 500 miles of the journey. This brave fellow, whose name unfortunately does not appear, had to ride back alone, "much of the way through mud up to the horse's knees."

He says: "On the 24th January 1859 Captain Brown came near to Lawrence, with his eleven emigrants from Missouri, and I joined him. We travelled by way of Topeka, northward through Nebraska.

"About thirty-seven miles from Topeka we entered a vacant log-cabin, belonging to an excellent man, who was a warm friend of Captain Brown. Our party consisted at this time only of the Captain, myself, and a man known by the name of Whipple in Kansas, but afterwards as Stevens at Harper's Ferry. Kagi and Tidd had

stayed behind at Topeka, to procure provisions for our journey, and our teamster had been sent back to bring them along. While waiting for them to rejoin us, we found ourselves surrounded by a band of human bloodhounds, headed by the notorious deputy-marshal of the United States, J. N. O. P. Wood. I afterwards learned that he was put on our track by a traitor from New Hampshire named Hussey.

"Mr Whipple lived alone in a small, empty cabin near the one we occupied. There had been heavy rains which produced a freshet; and one day he walked a short distance from the cabin to ascertain whether the waters had subsided. Suddenly, eight of the marshal's men came upon him, and asked him if he had seen any negroes thereabout. He told them if they would come with him he would show them some. He conducted them to his cabin, where he had left his rifle. He came out immediately and pointed his rifle at the leader, commanding him to surrender, which he did at once. The other men put spurs into their horses and rode off as fast as possible. At that time I was sole bodyguard of Captain Brown, the eleven fugitives, and the prisoner who had surrendered. Whipple kept a sharp look-out, acting as our sentry. We were detained at this place about three days. At last our provisions arrived, and we were joined by a band of Topeka boys, who had walked thirty-seven miles in the night to aid us in our enterprise. We started on

our journey. A short distance from our road was Muddy Creek. Marshal Wood, supposing our party must pass that way, stationed himself on the opposite side of the Creek, with his eighty armed men. They had made careful preparations, well knowing that it was no joke to attack 'old John Brown.' Captain Brown had with him only twenty-three white men, all told. He placed them in double file in front of the emigrant waggons, and said: 'Now go straight at 'em, boys! They'll be sure to run!'

"In obedience to this order, they marched towards the Creek; but scarcely had the foremost entered the water, when the valiant United States marshal mounted his horse and rode off in hot haste. His men followed as fast as possible; but they were not all as lucky as he was in untying their horses from the stumps and bushes. The scene was ridiculous beyond description. Some horses were hastily mounted by two men. One man grabbed tight hold of the tail of a horse, trying to leap on from behind, while the rider was putting spurs into his sides; so he went flying through the air, his feet touching the ground now and then. Those of our men who had horses followed them about six miles, and brought back with them four prisoners and five horses. Meanwhile, Captain Brown and the rest of his company succeeded in drawing the emigrant waggons through the Creek, by means of long ropes. This battle of Muddy Creek was known ever after, in Kansas, by the name of 'the battle of the spurs.'"

The four prisoners Brown compelled to walk, on resuming his journey, lest they should escape, giving their horses to the "Topeka boys" who had come to his help. But, "as he meant them no unkindness, he would walk with them," which he at once did, admonishing them on "the wickedness of slavery and the meanness of slave-hunting." They gave vent to their feelings in round volleys of oaths, for which Brown promptly rebuked them. "Gentlemen," he said, "you do very wrong to thus take the name of God in vain. Besides, it is very foolish; for if there is a God you can gain nothing by such profanity; and if there is no God, how foolish it is to ask God's curses on anything." When he released them the next morning they demanded their horses and weapons. "No," said he, "your legs will carry you as fast as you want to run. You won't find any more old Browns between this and Atchison"—the Missourian town from which they had come. After Harper's Ferry one of them said of him that although a monomaniac on the subject of slavery, he was a brave and honest man, and that "John Brown was the best man he had ever met, and knew more about religion."

For three months the little band held steadily on its way, now and then hospitably entertained, at other times looked upon with coldness and suspicion, anon assisted by collections at churches, then threatened by armed parties who were in pursuit of them, until at last they reached Canada in safety, not one fugitive having been lost by the way. Well

might Brown say: "Now, Lord, permit Thy servant to die in peace; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation!" He added: "I could not brook the thought that any ill should befall you, least of all that you should be taken back to slavery. The arm of Jehovah protected us." It had indeed been a trying expedition for Brown, and through it all he had suffered from weakness and ill-health. Jacob Willets of Topeka, Kansas, testifies that in the early days of the expedition Brown appealed to him for help for the slaves, who were poorly clad. As he spoke Willets noticed that Brown shivered a good deal, and that his legs trembled under him. Finding that Brown had on only a pair of thin cotton "pantaloons," he insisted on giving him some new underclothing he had just purchased, which Brown was reluctant to accept. His first thought was for others.

They crossed over from Detroit, Michigan, into Canada on 12th March, where, "under the paw of the lion," as Brown expressed it, they were free. They speedily found employment, and subsequent accounts of their progress were all that could be desired. When his sentence of death was read out to them, two of the women declared they would gladly die in his place. And one remarked, "If the Bible was true, John Brown practised most of it here, so he would be rewarded by the 'Old Master' up higher with greater happiness."

According to Wendell Phillips: "When he had passed his human *protégés* from the vulture of the United States to the safe shelter of the English

lion, this brave, frank and sublime truster in God's right and absolute justice entered his name in the City of Cleveland — 'John Brown of Kansas' — advertised the horses for sale, and stood in front of the auctioneer's stand, notifying all bidders of the defect in the title. 'But,' he added, with nonchalance when he told the story, 'they brought a very excellent price.'"

Summing up his motives for this brave deed, Brown said: "Do not allow anyone to say I acted from revenge. I claim no man has a right to revenge himself. It is a feeling that does not enter into my heart. What I do, I do for the cause of human liberty, and because I regard it as necessary."

THE DUNKER CHURCH WHERE JOHN BROWN PREACHED ON THE SUNDAY NIGHT OF THE RAID.

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CHAPTER IX

FINAL PREPARATIONS

FROM the beginning of April to the end of September 1859 we have but a scanty knowledge of the movements of Brown and his associates. During the early part of April he was lying ill of a fever at his eldest son's house, Ashtabula County, Ohio. After his recovery we find him at Rochester, where he addressed a public meeting, and secured the services of one of the bravest of his band, a negro named Shields Green. In May, Brown visited Boston, making careful inquiries into the manufacture of biscuits and beef meal, and in June, after completing the previously-mentioned contract for pikes at Collinsville, Connecticut, by the payment of the balance of 300 dollars, he returned to Ashtabula County. During these journeys it seems certain that he was collecting funds for his enterprise, and taking into his confidence, as far as seemed advisable, prominent Abolitionists in the towns he visited. Two other sons—Watson, aged twenty-four, and Oliver, about twenty—were also in Ohio. They both fell by his side at Harper's Ferry. A letter written by Oliver to his

young wife at this time supplies us with a few particulars of their condition.

"WEST ANDOVER,
"ASHTABULA COUNTY, OHIO,
18th June 1859.

"MY DEAR WIFE,—I write to let you know that we have arrived here sound and well, and in good spirits. We have met with great encouragement since we left home. We found John and his folks in good health. The frost has been much more severe here than at North Elba. Thousands of acres of wheat and rye are entirely ruined by it; the leaves on the maple and hickory trees are falling, as if it were Fall. The season is much more forward here; haymaking has commenced, and the grass is very good. I send you a photograph of myself. Oh, Martha, I would give everything if I could have your picture. Do not fail of having it taken while I am gone, should you have an opportunity. You don't know how I value that lock of hair. There may yet be an opportunity to send a picture to me. I send you two dollars, which I cannot be satisfied to keep. I also send you a small book. Heaven bless you, my dear Martha.—Your affectionate husband,

"OLIVER BROWN.

"*P.S.*—I have concluded to send you another copy of my picture, which is pasted upon a board and intended to be put into a frame for a wall picture. These two you will please keep, as I may want some

day to see how I looked when I was young. I would send more for the rest of the family, but have not the means, as thirty cents is all the cash I can command.

"I very much like the people here; they are liberal-minded, whole-souled people. I am told that in no country in the world is there so great a proportion of 'infidels'; and also that it would be equally hard to find a country where there is so much comfort, thrift, intelligence, morality, and progressive and reform sentiment. I look upon the development of such a people as the most important and encouraging fact I know of. Much has the spirit of emigration done for all these Western States; it is the growing progressive spirit. He certainly must be a very shallow observer and superficial reasoner who is ever crying over the folly of those who would move to better their condition. It was just such folly-stricken people who have developed the whole western world, and are now knocking the scales from the eyes of the conservative blind.—Again I am affectionately your husband,

"OLIVER BROWN."

The so-called "infidels" referred to in the *P.S.* were men who had withdrawn from membership in Christian Churches because the said Churches supported slavery. They were ardent Abolitionists, who could not reconcile such support with their sense of right, or with their conception of Christianity.

In June, Brown was busy at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, establishing a depôt of arms and

stores. Towards the end of the month, with his two sons, he crossed into Maryland, to Hagerstown, where they registered themselves as "Smith and two sons from Western New York." They said they were on the look-out for a farm in Virginia suitable for raising sheep. The next day they drove over to Harper's Ferry, and after spending two or three days in careful examination of the neighbouring mountains, they hired a large farm with three unoccupied houses, whose owner, Dr Kennedy, had recently died. It was situated on the Maryland side of the river, about five miles from Harper's Ferry. They paid the rent in advance, up to March 1860, bought a number of hogs from the family, and agreed to take care of the stock until a sale could be held. This undertaking was scrupulously fulfilled.

In a few weeks they were joined by others of their party, until at one time the neighbouring families—of whom some half-dozen were within hail—noticed no less than twelve men on the premises. Brown's daughter Anne, a young girl of fifteen, also arrived, and with her Martha, the young wife of Oliver. They remained until the middle of September, when they returned to North Elba. It needed great caution to remove their large stores of arms and ammunition from Chambersburg to the farm without exciting suspicion. And with all their precautions they were not entirely successful. According to Oliver P. Anderson, one of the band, whose *Voice from Harper's Ferry*, published in

Boston in 1861, supplies many interesting details:— "The Captain laboured and travelled night and day, sometimes on old Dolly, his brown mule, and sometimes in the waggon. He would start directly after night (fall), and travel the fifty miles between the farm and Chambersburg by daylight next morning; and he otherwise kept open communication between headquarters and the latter place, in order that matters might be arranged in due season." He adds that during their stay at the farm their feelings of hostility to slavery were deepened by four violent deaths among slaves in their immediate neighbourhood. "At Harper's Ferry there was no milk-and-water sentimentality, no offensive contempt for the negro while working in his cause; the pulsations of each and every heart beat in harmony for the suffering and pleading slave. I thank God that I have been permitted to realise to its furthest, fullest extent the social harmony of an anti-slavery family, carrying out to the letter the principles of its antetype, the anti-slavery cause. In John Brown's house, and in John Brown's presence, men from widely different parts of the Continent met and united in one company, wherein no hateful prejudice dared intrude its ugly self—no ghost of a distinction found space to enter. Every morning, when the old man was at home, he called the family around, read from his Bible, and offered to God most fervent and touching supplications for all flesh; and especially pathetic were his petitions in behalf of the oppressed. I never heard John Brown pray that he did not

make strong appeals to God for the deliverance of the slave."

This duty done, the men retired to the loft, where they remained in confinement during the day, only venturing abroad at night, lest they should excite the suspicions of their neighbours. They passed the dreary hours as best they could, studying Forbes's *Manual*, and going through a quiet drill under Stevens. Conversation could only be conducted in whispers, and at times the men became almost desperate. "At such times neither slavery nor slaveholders were discussed mincingly." As long as Brown's daughter and daughter-in-law remained they relieved their ennui with numerous little acts of kindness—bringing them fruits and wild flowers—which the survivors afterwards gratefully remembered.

"During his residence at Kennedy Farm," wrote another of the men, "Brown used often to take his Bible, sit down on a stool in the corner near the door, read a chapter and then make prayer. He always did so in the morning. We never ate a meal at headquarters until a blessing was asked on it."

Between the departure of the two young women in the middle of September, and Saturday 15th October, when the little band of heroes held the last council meeting, we have little information of a special character beyond that contained in the following letters, written to their respective wives by the two devoted sons of John Brown. As will be seen by the concluding sentence of Watson's last letter, the

shadow of their coming doom seemed already to be resting upon them.

Oliver's Second Letter to his Wife.

"Home, *9th October* 1859.

"My dear Martha,—Having opportunity to write you once more, I improve it with the greatest pleasure to myself and with the hope of pleasing you. I arrived here two days sooner than father and Watson. They have gone back once more. We are all well at present. You can hardly think how I want to see you, or how lonesome I was the day I left you. That day I never shall forget. I passed some good resolutions on my way to New York. I mean to live up to them. Nothing else could strengthen me to do the right so much as the thought of you. It is when I look at your picture that I am wholly ashamed of my every meanness, weakness and folly. I would not part with that picture for anything on earth—but the original. I have made a morocco case for it, and carry it close around my body. I am more and more determined every day to live a more unselfish life.

"Now, Martha, you can hardly conceive my great anxiety about you in your present situation, and you will certainly allow me to suggest some ideas to you for your own good. Let me ask you to try to keep up good, cheerful spirits. Take plenty of sleep and rest; plenty of out-door exercise.

Bathe often. And finally, do read good books, such as Parker's *Sermons* and Combe's *Constitution of Man.* These books will do much to keep you from being lonesome.

"Finally, Martha, do try to enjoy yourself. Make the most of everything.—Remember your affectionate husband,

"OLIVER BROWN."

WATSON BROWN TO HIS WIFE. (1.)

"CHAMBERSBURG, *3rd September* 1859.

"DEAR BELL,—You can guess how I long to see you only by knowing how you wish to see me. I think of you all day and dream of you at night. I would gladly come home and stay with you always, but for that which brought me here—a desire to do something for others, and not to live wholly for my own happiness. I am at home, five miles north of Harper's Ferry, in an old house on the Kennedy Farm, where we keep some of our things. Four of us sleep here. I came here to be alone. I was at Chambersburg a few days ago, and wrote you a few lines from there. I am beginning to look for a letter from you. It is now dark and I am all alone. But I have some good company. I have just received your letter of 30th August, and you may well think I am glad to hear from you. You may kiss the baby a good many times every day for me. I am thinking of you and him all the

time. Tell Salmon that I know better how to pity him for having to stay at home than he does me for being away. Tell him to keep a stiff upper lip.

"Bell, nothing but the object before me could keep me from you. It is hard for you, no doubt, and I hope it will not last long; though I have no thought of backing out till I see the thing well a-going.

"Give my respects to all, and answer this as soon as you can, and tell me all the news.—Yours for ever, WATSON."

WATSON BROWN TO HIS WIFE. (2.)

"*16th September.*

"DEAR WIFE,—As I may not have an opportunity to write to you for some time, I improve this. I received your letter of 14th September the night the girls got home, which I was very glad to get. O, Bell, I do want to see you and the little fellow, born during his father's absence, very much, but I must wait. There was a slave near here whose wife was sold off South the other day, and he was found in Thomas Kennedy's orchard, dead, the next morning. Cannot come home so long as such things are done here. We have only two black men with us as yet, but expect more. One of these has a wife and seven children in slavery. I sometimes feel as though I could not make this sacrifice, but what would I not

want others to do were I in their place! I find that, always to live at home and among one's friends is never to know how much we love them. Keep up good courage, in spite of the cold weather; and keep the baby warm. Write often, as father directs; and I will do as well as I can about writing. It does me good to have you say you think of me, although I know it.—Ever your husband,

"WATSON BROWN."

WATSON BROWN TO HIS WIFE. (3.)

"CHAMBERSBURG, 14*th October* 1859.

"DEAR WIFE,—I am again here, and have another opportunity to write. We are all well here and at home. We leave here this afternoon or to-morrow for the last time. You will probably hear from us very soon after getting this, if not before.

"The weather is very fine here. We had a slight frost last Monday and Tuesday nights. We have some addition to our family since the girls left. We are all eager for the work and confident of success. There was another murder committed near our place the other day, making in all five murders and one suicide, within five miles of our place, since we have lived here; they were all slaves too. Tell Salmon that we should be very glad of his company, but he must keep cool where he is, and be sure to write when he knows where to direct. O, Bell, I would give a good deal for your picture. If you have an opportunity to get

it taken, I wish you would, and send it to me. Give my regards to all the friends, and keep up good courage, there is a better day a-coming. I can but commend you to yourself and your friends if I should never see you again.—From your affectionate husband, WATSON BROWN."

When visiting Frederick Douglass earlier in the year Brown had made the acquaintance of Shields Green, a fugitive slave from South Carolina. He was a man of few words, but Brown, seeing in him a man of courage and determination, had communicated to him his plans and hopes, and received from Green a promise to join in the enterprise whenever his services were needed. During one of his journeys to Chambersburg to remove the arms to Kennedy's Farm, Brown arranged for an interview with Douglass, and asked him to bring Green with him. They met in an old stone quarry near Chambersburg. Brown, who had Kagi with him, being ostensibly engaged in fishing in the neighbouring stream. "He looked every way like a man of the neighbourhood," says Douglass, "and as much at home as any of the farmers around there. His hat was old and storm-beaten, and his clothing about the colour of the stone quarry itself. His face wore an anxious expression, and he was much worn by thought and exposure."

The account of the interview is continued in Douglass's own words: "Captain Brown, Kagi, Shields Green and myself sat down among the

rocks, and talked over the enterprise about to be undertaken. The taking of Harper's Ferry, of which Brown had merely hinted before, was now declared his settled purpose, and he wanted to know what I thought of it. I at once opposed it with all the arguments at my command. To me, such a measure would be fatal to running off slaves (the original plan), and fatal to all engaged. It would be an attack on the Federal Government, and would array the whole country against us. Captain Brown did most of the talking on the other side. He did not at all object to rousing the nation; it seemed to him that something startling was needed. He had completely renounced his old plan, and thought that the capture of Harper's Ferry would serve as notice to the slaves that their friends had come, and as a trumpet to rally them to his standard. I was no match for him in such matters, but I told him that all his arguments, and all his descriptions of the place, convinced me that he was going into a perfect steel trap, and that once in he would never get out alive; he would be surrounded at once, and escape would be impossible. He was not to be shaken, but treated my views respectfully, replying that even if surrounded he would find means to cut his way out. But that would not be forced upon him; he would have the best citizens of the neighbourhood as prisoners at the start, and, holding them as hostages, should be able to dictate terms of egress from the town. I told him that Virginia would blow him and his hostages

sky-high rather than that he should hold Harper's Ferry an hour. Our talk was long and earnest; we spent the most of Saturday and a part of Sunday in this debate—Brown for Harper's Ferry, and I against it; he for striking a blow which should instantly rouse the country, and I for the policy of gradually and unaccountably drawing off the slaves to the mountains, as at first suggested and proposed by him. When I found that he had fully made up his mind and could not be dissuaded, I turned to Green and told him he heard what Captain Brown had said; his old plan was changed, and I should return home, if he wished to go with me he could do so. Captain Brown urged us both to go with him. In parting, he put his arms around me in a manner more than friendly, and said: 'Come with me, Douglass; I will defend you with my life. I want you for a special purpose. When I strike, the bees will begin to swarm, and I shall want you to help hive them.' When about to leave I asked Green what he had decided to do, and was surprised by his saying in his broken way, 'I b'lieve I'll go wid de ole man.'"

Bravo, fugitive slave! This decision shall in three short months add the name of Shields Green to the noble army of martyrs "in Freedom's cause."

And yet again. During the fight at Harper's Ferry, Green was sent with a message by Captain Brown to Osborne Anderson, and Hazlett in the arsenal on the Potomac. They had by this time decided that their attempt had failed, and they must

seek safety in flight, an attempt in which Anderson succeeded although Hazlett failed. Anderson urged Green to escape with them. He turned and looked towards the engine-house where Brown and his few men were.

"You think der's no chance, Osborne?"

"Not one," was the reply.

"And de ole Captain can't get away?"

"No," said both men.

"Well," with a long look and slow utterance, "I guess I'll go back to de ole man."

Remember Shields Green, the negro!

It seems to have been Brown's original intention to deliver his attack on 24th October, but rumours of the issue of a search warrant to examine his premises were afloat, and this fact, or the fear of treachery, decided him to take action a week earlier. This would deprive him of some expected assistance, but he preferred to risk that rather than the other alternative. He was buoyed up with the hope that once the standard was raised, slaves would flock readily around him, and put him in a powerful position. After a hurried visit to Baltimore, Brown returned to Kennedy Farm on 14th October. The next day, Saturday, their last council was held, when they discussed their plans in detail. The conference was continued the next day, and as it broke up before the march to Harper's Ferry, Brown addressed to his men these last words:—

"And now, gentlemen, let me press one thing on your minds. You all know how dear life is to you,

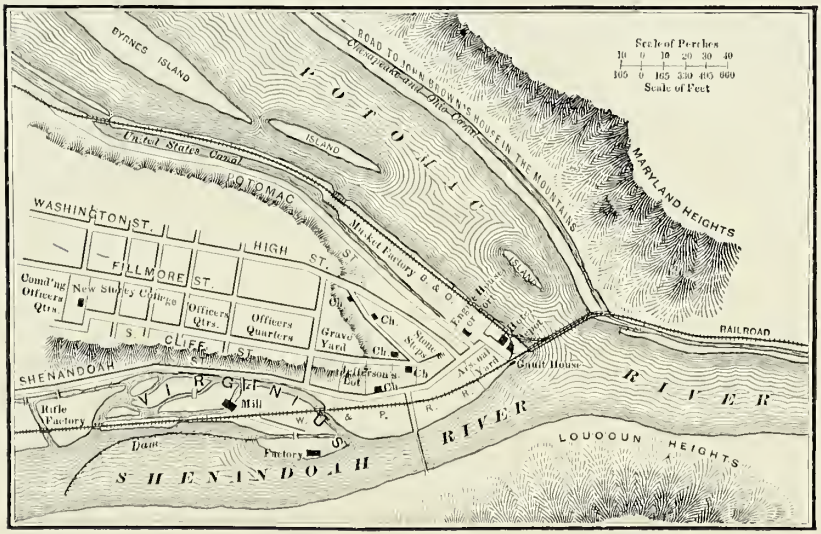
and how dear your lives are to your friends, and in remembering that, consider that the lives of others are as dear to them as yours are to you. Do not, therefore, take the life of any man if you can possibly avoid it; but if it is necessary to take life in order to save your own, then make sure work of it."

CHAPTER X

HARPER'S FERRY

HARPER'S FERRY was so called from Robert Harper, an English millwright, who obtained a grant of the land in 1748 from Lord Fairfax. It is said to have been selected as the site for the national armoury by Washington himself in 1794.

According to a contemporary description by a Virginian topographer, Harper's Ferry was a town of some 5000 inhabitants, in Jefferson County, Virginia, on the borders of Maryland, at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, where the joint streams pass through a picturesque gap in the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Ridge is here about 1200 feet high, presenting bare, precipitous cliffs on each side of the river. The town was originally built in two streets, stretching along a narrow shelf between the base of the cliff and the river. They met almost at right angles, and were named Potomac and Shenandoah Streets respectively. With increasing population the town straggled in detached pieces up the side of the cliff, and on a stretch of level ground at some 400



PLAN OF HARPER'S FERRY.

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feet elevation. A bridge crossed each river, the Baltimore and Ohio Railway using the one over the Potomac. The Government factory and arsenal occupied the lowest point of land between the two streams, a large portion of Potomac Street being occupied by the workshops and offices. In this arsenal was usually stored from one to two hundred thousand stand of arms. At the end of Shenandoah Street, on a small island in the, Shenandoah River, at a distance of some half mile from the arsenal, was a rifle factory. The town is about 170 miles from Richmond, and sixty from Washington. It can scarcely be said to constitute an ideal place for the kind of prolonged guerrilla warfare contemplated by Brown. The mountains are comparatively easy of approach, roads being cut and farms dotted about in all directions.

Cold and dark was that eventful Sunday night—16th October 1859—when the little band of scarcely more than a score, five being blacks, set out from the hill farm on their desperate enterprise, taking with them a one-horse waggon containing pikes and other implements.

Owen Brown, with two new men, remained in charge of the farm, where the bulk of their arms and ammunition was stored. At a school-house one mile from the town a second depôt was formed. From this spot two men were sent ahead to cut the telegraph wires. By 11 p.m. the remainder had entered the town, turned out the lights, captured the watchman on the Potomac Bridge, and the three

watchmen at the armoury, bursting the door with a crowbar.

Here Brown established his headquarters. Two men were stationed at the end of the bridge, where they failed to capture the relief watchman coming on duty at midnight. He raised an alarm but with little immediate result. Brown also took possession of the other bridge, the arsenal and the rifle factory, apparently without giving his men any contingent orders should they be forced from their positions. Neither is there any evidence to show that he had thought out a line of retreat should the slaves fail to rise as rapidly as he expected, or if he should be attacked by overwhelming numbers. An error which was to cost him dear.

The eastward-bound express was due to cross the bridge soon after midnight, and Brown sent four men to stop it. Some few passengers offered resistance, and a negro porter was shot, an unhappy beginning to an enterprise for negro liberation. After detaining the train for several hours, Brown weakly allowed it to proceed on its journey, thus sending the news of his attack on the arsenal direct to Washington, and hastening his doom. The passengers wrote accounts of what they had seen on scraps of paper and flung them from the windows of the train as they rushed along, thus rousing the whole countryside. After the train had left, the rails were torn up, a useless precaution then.

Meanwhile Brown had sent Stevens with half a dozen men some five or six miles into the country

to capture several prominent slave-holders, giving them special instructions to seize Colonel Washington, a descendant of the great President's brother, and to bring with them the historic sword presented to George Washington by Frederick the Great, which Brown proposed to appropriate to his own use as the leader of the party of Freedom. This enterprise was successfully accomplished before morning, and several bodies of slaves were liberated. A few joined Brown, who immediately placed in their hands his favourite weapon the pike, but found to his keen disappointment that they were not thereby transformed into soldiers.

"On entering the armoury," said Colonel Washington afterwards, "I found some eight or ten prisoners who recognised me. We were seated together and conversing, when the old man, whom we found by this time to be Brown, after asking our names, said: 'It is now too dark to write, but when it is sufficiently light, if you have not paper and pens, I will furnish you, and I require that you should each write to your friends to send a negro man apiece as ransom.'"

As the morning light dawned every townsman who appeared in the streets was arrested, until some fifty — more or less — were shut up in the armoury. But it was not until the usual hour of commencing business that the town gradually became aware that it had been occupied during the night by armed Abolitionists and slaves. Little by little, the bolder spirits, seizing what arms

they could, collected in knots on the outskirts of the town, and shots began to be exchanged between them and Brown's sentinels. The confident bearing of the invaders convinced the startled natives that they were occupying the town in force, and hasty and urgent messages were sent for succour from the State militia. Brown, thoughtful throughout for the welfare of his prisoners, ordered breakfast for them as well as for his own men from the neighbouring hotel. At this time his men were stationed as follows. He, with his two sons, Watson and Oliver, Stevens and two others, occupied the armoury; Kagi with Leeman, Taylor, Anderson and Copeland held the lower part of the town and the rifle works; Owen Brown, Cook, Tidd, Merriam and Coppock were stationed at Kennedy Farm and the school-house, the remainder being placed as sentinels at the bridges, corners of the principal streets, and the public buildings. The arrests went on until 8 a.m., when no less than sixty prisoners were detained in the armoury.

The first shot fired after daybreak was by a man named Turner, who fired at the sentinels as they were arresting two townsmen. A second was fired by a grocer, who was immediately shot dead by a Sharpe's rifle. Shortly afterwards some armed Virginians got into a room overlooking the armoury gates and fired at Brown's party, killing one and mortally wounding his son Watson, who, however, lingered in

agony until Wednesday morning, dying then in the arms of Coppock, who, in a letter written from prison to Mrs Brown, thus describes his end.

"I was with your sons when they fell. Oliver lived but a very few minutes after he was shot. He spoke no word but yielded calmly to his fate. Watson was shot at ten o'clock on Monday morning, and died about three o'clock on Wednesday morning. He suffered much. Though mortally wounded at 10 o'clock, yet at 3 o'clock Monday afternoon he fought bravely against the men who charged on us. When the enemy was repulsed, and the excitement of the charge was over, he began to sink rapidly. After we were taken prisoners he was placed in the guard-house with me. He complained of the hardness of the bench on which he was lying. I begged hard for a bed for him, or even a blanket, but could obtain none for him. I took off my coat and placed it under him, and held his head in my lap, in which position he died without a groan or struggle."

During the whole of the forenoon the little band were absolute masters of the town, and could have retired to the mountains with comparative safety, as the inhabitants were too confused and terror-stricken to offer any organised resistance. Why Brown did not retire has never been satis-

factorily explained. What he hoped to gain by remaining is difficult to see, except that he appears to have anticipated an immediate rising of the whole slave population of the neighbourhood. This had not been sufficiently prepared for, and the delay proved fatal.

By mid-day a hundred militia had arrived from Charlestown, and his last avenue of escape was closed. The officer in charge placed detachments at all exits from the town, and assisted by a large body of volunteers proceeded to attack the rifle factory. His information led him to believe that the town was held by from three to five hundred men. At the Shenandoah Bridge he captured William Thompson, his companion being shot. As only five men were in the rifle factory, it was soon carried by assault. Kagi and his men tried to escape by the river, and four of them succeeded in reaching a rock in the middle of it, from which they renewed the unequal contest with 200 men, stationed on each side of the river. Kagi, riddled with bullets, fell into the river, soon to be followed by a black comrade, and Leary fell next, mortally wounded. Copeland then surrendered, and with Leary, who lingered some hours, was taken into the town and held prisoner. The remaining man, Leeman, ran for the river and was pursued. Shots were fired and he fell, but rising again he ran on, throwing away his gun. He drew his pistols and tried to fire but they both failed. Then cutting off his accoutrements with a bowie-

knife he sprang into the river. A Virginian militiaman waded in after him. Seeing it was useless to resist any longer, he threw his up arms and cried "Don't shoot," but the brutal Virginian, pointing his pistol at the poor fellow's face, blew it to pieces.

Attacked by overwhelming numbers and hemmed in on all sides, the other little knots of Brown's men gradually retreated to the armoury, losing several comrades by the way. Here they finally took refuge in the engine-house with ten selected prisoners, barricading the doors and making loopholes in the walls. This movement literally shut them in a trap, and it was only a question of a few hours before they must either surrender or be killed. Fresh contingents of volunteers continued to arrive from the neighbouring towns and counties, but the heroic little band still sturdily defended themselves. All the houses bordering on the armoury buildings were filled with men, and irregular firing continued until nightfall. During these hours Captain Turner was killed, and also the Mayor of Harper's Ferry, who rashly crossed the line of fire. On the defender's side several had been killed: Jem, Colonel Washington's slave coachman, a free negro, his companion, and Newby, an emancipated slave who had a wife and nine children in slavery in the vicinity. Oliver Brown was also dead, having lived only a few minutes after being hit.

Brown now attempted to come to terms with

his assailants on the suggestion of Mr Kitzmiller, one of his prisoners, and allowed Stevens, carrying a flag of truce, to go out with Kitzmiller for the purpose of treating with them. But the militia were mad with hatred of the Abolitionists, and shooting down Stevens, carried him off as a prisoner. And even as prisoners they were no longer safe from inhuman brutality. Thompson was detained in the parlour of an inn, and a number of young Virginians—according to the statement of one of them at the subsequent trial—determined to murder him. They would have shot him in the house had not the landlord's daughter thrown herself in front of him and protected him with her body. She said afterwards, "She didn't want to have the carpet spoiled." But her intervention availed nothing, whatever its motive. They dragged him from the house and flung him over the bridge, shooting him as he fell, and continued to make a target of him as he tried to crawl round the base of the pier till he could crawl no longer.

A fresh contingent arriving in the early evening from Martinsburg, fifty men tried to carry the engine-house by assault, but they were beaten off with the loss of two killed and six wounded. By this time the telegraph and railway had been repaired, and Harper's Ferry was in uninterrupted communication with the State capital and the central Government at Washington. The cabinet had ordered a contingent of U. S. troops to the

COLONEL ROBERT LEE, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE NAVAL AND MILITARY FORCES OF VIRGINIA, 1861.

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scene of the outbreak, and the Governor of Virginia and the City of Baltimore had sent men also. Brown's last act for the day was an offer to liberate his prisoners on condition that his party should cross the bridge unmolested. His offer was refused. Night fell and firing ceased.

Brown was left now without a ray of hope. The dead bodies of Kagi, Leeman, Taylor and Thompson floated in the river. Copeland, Stevens and Leary were prisoners, the last two being dangerously wounded. In the streets lay the mutilated bodies of Newby and others. In the engine-house were the dead bodies of his son Oliver and Dauphin Thompson, whilst his other son Watson lingered on in hopeless agony. The only unwounded survivors in the engine-house were Brown, Anderson, Coppock, Shields Green, a negro, a few negroes who had been liberated and armed by Brown, and the ten selected prisoners. In the town at least 1500 men were under arms guarding every approach, whilst during the night eighty U. S. marines with two pieces of artillery arrived, under the command of Colonel Robert Lee, afterwards General Lee, chief commander of the Confederate armies in the Civil War.

The mad frenzy of hate and lust of blood into which the Southerners had now plunged is illustrated by the following passages from one of their own organs, the *Frederick Herald*, a Maryland paper.

"The dead lay on the streets and in the river,

and were subjected to every indignity that a wild and madly-excited people could heap upon them. Curses were freely uttered against them, and kicks and blows inflicted upon them. The huge mulatto who shot Mr Turner was lying in the gutter in front of the arsenal, with a terrible wound in his neck; and, though dead and gory, vengeance was unsatisfied, and many, as they ran sticks into his wounds or beat him with them, wished that he had a thousand lives, that all of them might be forfeited in expiation and avengement of the foul deed he had committed. Leeman lay upon a rock in the river, and was made the target for the practice of those who had captured Sharpe's rifles in the fray. Shot after shot was fired at him, and when tired of this sport a man waded out to where he lay and set him up in grotesque attitudes, and finally pushed him off, when he floated down the stream. His body and that of Thompson, which was also in the water, were subsequently brought on shore, as were all of them except a few which were taken by the physicians. It may be thought that there was cruelty and barbarity in this; but the public mind had been frenzied by the outrages of these men, who, being outlaws, were regarded as food for carrion birds, and not as human creatures."

During this last night of his freedom Brown seems not to have slept a moment, despite the fact that he had been under arms since the previous

evening, and had been fighting most of the time. No sign of weakness or faltering was observable in his demeanour, nor any sign of regret for the position in which he found himself. At short intervals during the hours of darkness his voice was heard, encouraging and confidant as ever. "Are you awake, men?" "Are you ready?" When Oliver fell by his side—said one of his prisoners—Brown remained at his port-hole coolly firing at his enemies, but when the fighting ceased for the night he went to his son's dead body, straightened out his limbs, and took off his trappings. Then, turning to the narrator, he said, "This is the third son I have lost in this cause."

To Colonel Washington also he spoke of his sons. He said he had not pressed them to join in the expedition, but did not regret their loss—*they had died in a good cause.*

The whole party had become imbued with Brown's spirit, and all felt they were acting, as Stevens expressed it, when asked by what authority they had seized the arsenal:—"By the authority of God Almighty."

Towards 7 o'clock on Tuesday morning, 18th October, the marines prepared for the final assault. Lieutenant Stuart offered Brown an opportunity of surrendering, promising him immediate protection and trial by law. Brown insisted on his terms of the previous day, and the negotiations ended. Advancing in two lines the marines tried to batter in the door with hammers, but failed, then, using a

heavy ladder as a battering ram, they forced an entrance, being aided from the inside by one of the prisoners. One marine fell, two were wounded, the rest rushed in, and within five minutes all was over. Anderson fell mortally wounded. The prisoners, acting on Colonel Washington's advice, climbed on the engines and held up their hands to show that they were non-combatants, at the same time pointing out Brown and his men to the assailants. Fortunately, in spite of the hail of bullets which had poured into the engine-house, not one of them was wounded.

The moment Brown was pointed out, in spite of the fact that he had surrended and laid down his arms, Lieutenant Green struck him on the head with his sword and knocked him down, repeating his blows after he had fallen, and a marine thrust his bayonet twice into the prostrate man's body. Coppock and Shields Green were captured unhurt. The bodies of the dead and wounded were then laid side by side on the grass in front of the engine-house, Watson Brown, still lingering in great pain, lying by the side of his dead brother Oliver. John Brown was insensible from loss of blood from the wounds inflicted after he had surrendered. It was with great difficulty the marines could prevent their prisoners from being immediately put to death by the infuriated mob, nearly every man of which was armed, and yelling, "Shoot them, shoot them!"

When the liberated prisoners appeared well and

unharmed cheers took the place of execrations, and the mob became slightly less excited and angry.

Of Brown's total little force of twenty-two men ten were killed, seven were captured, tried and hanged, and only five escaped. On the other side six were killed and eight wounded.

Before his removal to gaol Brown recovered consciousness, and entered into conversation with those about him. He declared that the town had been at his mercy, that he could have destroyed it and most of its inhabitants had such been his design. He had not done so as he simply wanted to liberate slaves. And whilst he had treated his prisoners with every consideration, he had been struck down when unarmed, and stabbed as he lay on the ground, as if he had been a wild beast.

They were next carried to the guard-house and laid on the floor, where poor Watson lingered until the next morning, and Brown lay groaning in pain for twenty hours before being taken to Charlestown gaol, insulted the whole time by angry Virginians, who had free access to him. In his pockets nearly 300 dollars in gold were found, these, with his papers, were taken charge of by Colonel Lee on behalf of the central Government.

"I have failed," he said to those who taunted him. "I have failed. You may dispose of me very easily —I am nearly disposed of now; but"—with something of prophetic foresight—"this question is still

to be settled—this negro question, I mean. The end of that is not yet."

On the Wednesday the few survivors were taken by train to Charlestown Gaol, and the schemes and hopes of years had to all appearance ended in abject failure.

COLONEL LEE'S MARINES BREAKING INTO THE ENGINE-HOUSE.

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CHAPTER XI

THE FUGITIVES

As it was reported that several members of Brown's force were in the neighbourhood, parties of mounted men were dispatched in all directions to hunt them down. At the school-house one search party found 100 Sharpe's rifles, a dozen pistols, ten kegs of gunpowder, 23,000 rifle percussion caps, 100,000 pistol caps, 13,000 Sharpe's rifle cartridges, 160 Sharpe's primers, 35 bayonets, 483 pikes, 12 reams of cartridge paper, and a variety of other articles. Another detachment reached Kennedy Farm, where they found a fire still smouldering in the stove. The place was littered with the contents of trunks and carpet bags, which had evidently been hastily opened, indicating a hurried visit by those left in the neighbourhood for a few necessary articles before attempting to escape. Besides a large quantity of provisions and wearing apparel, a number of letters, copies of the constitution drawn up by Brown and other documents were found. These were eagerly seized in the hope that they would be of material service in the subsequent investigations.

The only member of Brown's family concerned in the expedition who succeeded in escaping was his son Owen, who had been left in charge of the farm. More than a dozen years afterwards, at his house on an island in Lake Erie, he related his experiences to Mr Ralph Keeber of the *Atlantic Monthly*, from whose account we take the following particulars.

Owen, whose right arm was injured, had with him Coppock and Merriam. They remained at the farm anxiously listening to the sounds of distant firing until the evening, when a released slave rode up asking them to go to the assistance of their friends. On the way they were met by Tidd, one of their companions, who stated that the fight had gone badly against them, all their comrades but seven being killed, their leader amongst the rest. Then Cook came flying from the school-house. Persuaded by Owen, they proceeded to the school-house, finding it deserted. Putting a bag of "sweet biscuit" and another of sugar on the horse of the negro, they returned to the farm for their rubber blankets and other necessaries. Making a hasty supper, they hurried up the mountain-side and hid in a laurel thicket, which afforded but slight shelter from the drenching rain. Owen's plan was to travel along the mountain ridges to Canada, hoping to benefit by his knowledge of the Underground Railway. He proposed to sleep and hide by day and to travel by night, lighting no fires, and not even speaking above a whisper until

they got well into Pennsylvania. As nothing better offered, all agreed except the negro, who complained of rheumatism and said he could not bear such a fatiguing journey. Owen suspected him of treachery, and although he had not slept for two nights resolved to watch. But fatigue overcame him, and for a few minutes he slept. In those few minutes the negro disappeared. Owen roused his companion and they resolved to push on at once, each man carrying two guns with ammunition and supplies. They were anxious to cross a road three miles ahead before daylight, and favoured by fog they succeeded. But they had only hidden for a few minutes in a thicket beyond when eight armed men rode by.

Cook advised stealing horses and riding boldly on, and it taxed Owen's resources to the uttermost to persuade him from such folly. Then he would go to Chambersburg where his wife was, and as Tidd and Coppock supported him, and only Merriam —the weakest of the party—supported Owen, he was obliged to give way against his better judgment, and proceed in that direction. One day a horseman riding past saw them crossing a field. He gave the alarm and the whole of the inhabitants of the valley rushed across the Potomac River in terror of "Cook's men," Cook being known in the neighbourhood. Brown had now to carry the whole of the provisions for the party as Merriam was too weak, and the others refused the burden. Another time they thought the hounds were out after them. Luckily,

they turned off after a fox, but it was clear that the whole countryside was on the alert. The want of proper rest and food, particularly the total absence of salt, began to tell on them, and all suffered from giddiness. When they approached the only pass through the mountains out of Maryland thay saw it flaming with a hundred fires, and heard the baying of numerous hounds. A small army was guarding the road. Crossing a creek and climbing a ravine they trudged on through the night, making a wide circuit to avoid the gap, Merriam gradually becoming weaker. From the summits of the mountains they saw the roads swarming with horsemen. That day they slept between the branches of a fallen tree. In the valley on the other side Cook succeeded in purchasing some food at a farmhouse, and they had their first good meal for more than a week. The next afternoon Cook, against Brown's advice, went forward to purchase more food. They waited until after midnight but he did not return. He had been arrested on suspicion, and a commission from John Brown being found upon him, his fate was sealed. He was sent into Virginia and shared his leader's doom. A day or two later, as his companions were hiding in a briar patch in the midst of a field near the Chambersburg Railway, vainly trying to keep each other warm in the beating sleet and rain, Cook, fettered, went by them in a train. They even heard the strains of the band which accompanied him to the station, without knowing

what they meant. Here they decided to risk sending Merriam on by train as he was too exhausted to walk further. He reached his friends in safety, but did not live long. The prolonged exposure had sapped his vital forces, and after lingering some time in weak health, he was found dead in bed.

The three remaining fugitives held on their way towards the North, helping themselves to poultry, milk and other food as occasion offered. They had lost count of time, had no watch, neither any map, and beyond the fact that they must be still in Pennsylvania, knew not where they were. A lift in a canal boat proved a very welcome change, brief as it was. At last they ventured to ask hospitality at a farmhouse, the cheery blaze of the firelight through the windows being more than they could resist after such prolonged lying in the open. A hearty meal was offered them, then a newspaper containing full details of the attack on Harper's Ferry. Here Owen first learned that his father was still alive and that his two brothers were killed. Reading aloud to his companions, he stumbled upon a minute description of himself, with the heavy reward offered for his capture. Coppock heard with a sigh of the condemnation of his brother. It needed all three in turn to read aloud through the narrative, then they sat in a long, painful silence. Whatever their host thought, he said nothing, but gave them a comfortable bed—a luxury they had long been deprived of—and sent them on their way the next morning.

Good Quakers—well known on the Underground Railway — now began to assist them, and they had better times. Then Coppock was sent off by stage coach, with their guns in a box, and safely reached his friends. Brown and Tidd, keeping only their revolvers, finally reached the North, where were friends in plenty, and they were able to rest in comparative safety, though for some time they had to change their residences frequently for fear of arrest.

On the 4th of July the next year, 1860, the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, there was a noteworthy gathering at the quiet Adirondack Farm round John Brown's grave. All the survivors of his family, and the whole of his followers remaining, except Tidd, met for the first and last time. A band of heroes hard to be matched at any period for pure unselfishness. Tidd and Coppock both died in the war, one by fever and the other in a railway accident, each faithful to the last to the principles of his loved leader.

CHAPTER XII

THE TRIAL

MEANWHILE all Virginia was in alarm. Her proud slave-holders and their boasted constitution had felt the impact of a handful of determined men, and both rocked under the blow. Business was suspended, 4000 militia were kept under arms, slaves were sold "South" in hundreds, at an estimated loss of 10,000,000 dollars, prominent slave-holders slept in fresh houses each night, and the whole State remained under a sense of insecurity, timorousness and nervous dread until their few prisoners were no longer above ground.

In the North, at the first, even many who held strong anti-slavery views denounced Brown's attempt as the act of a fanatic and a madman. But as the trial proceeded, and his character and aims became more clearly understood, a great revulsion of feeling took place, and he rose to the position of hero and martyr. Whilst the rarer and purer spirits, men like Emerson, Theodore Parker, Whittier, Thoreau, and Wendell Phillips, from the beginning saw clearly the greatness and nobility

of his character, and honoured him accordingly. "All gentlemen," said Emerson, "are on his side. I do not mean by gentlemen people of scented hair and perfumed handkerchiefs, but men of gentle blood and generosity 'fulfilled with all nobleness,' who, like the Cid, give the outcast leper a share of their bed; like the dying Sidney, pass the cup of cold water to the soldier that needs it more."

Wounded and in prison, a felon's doom lying just ahead of him, poor and unknown, he suddenly leaped into fame, and became an object of reverence and affection to millions, many of whom, had a capable, daring leader been found, would have marched to his deliverance.* For some time it was feared his wounds would prove fatal. But, thanks to his temperate habits and hardy constitution, he recovered, and lived to render the cause of his life a vastly greater service than if he had died quietly in his cell.

On Wednesday morning, 19th October, Brown was committed to Charlestown Gaol—where he was to spend the remaining forty-two days of his life—and it was not until 7th November that his gaolers displayed humanity enough to give him a change of clothing. They left him lying in his

* Alcott's Diary, 23rd October: "There should be enough of courage and intrepidity in the North—in Massachusetts men—to steal South, since they cannot march openly there, rescue him from the slave-holders, the State and United States courts, and save him for the impending crisis. Captain Higginson would be good for that leadership, and No. 64" (Alcott himself) "will be ready to march with the rest."

blood-stained garments, just as he had fallen at Harper's Ferry, with his legs in irons. On Tuesday afternoon, 18th October, Governor Wise visited the prisoners, and some particulars of their conversation were published in a local Virginian paper whose reporter was present. Brown and Stevens occupied the same room. Brown was found lying on the floor with his feet to the fire and his head supported by pillows on the back of a chair. His hair was so completely covered by clotted blood that the reporter could not tell its colour. His white beard was blood-stained also. A few feet from him lay Stevens, his hands folded on his breast in a childlike way, clasping tightly a small packet containing miniatures of his two sisters.

Brown frankly answered all questions put to him except such as might implicate others. He declared himself to be the author — in the main—of the pamphlet entitled "Provisional Constitution and Ordinances for the People of the United States," copies of which had been found on all the prisoners. He admitted that he had confidently expected large reinforcements from Virginia, Kentucky, Maryland, North and South Carolina, when once he had raised the standard of freedom, and reluctantly acknowledged his disappointment. He spoke of his sons repeatedly, and asked if they were both dead. When told they were, "How many bodies did you take from the engine-house?" he asked.

"Three."

"Then," said he, quickly, "they are not both dead; there were three dead bodies there last night. Gentlemen, my son is doubtless living and in your power. I will ask for him what I would not ask for myself; let him have kind treatment, for he is as pure and noble-hearted a youth as ever breathed the breath of life."

On his return to Richmond, Governor Wise gave his impressions of Brown. "They are themselves mistaken who take him to be a madman. He is a bundle of the best nerves I ever saw, cut, and thrust, and bleeding, and in bonds. He is a man of clear head, of courage, fortitude and simple ingenuousness. He is cool, collected and indomitable, and it is but just to him to say that he was humane to his prisoners . . . and he inspired me with great trust in his integrity as a man of truth. He is fanatic, vain and garrulous, but firm, truthful and intelligent. He professes to be a Christian in communion with the Congregational Church of the North, and openly preaches his purpose of universal emancipation. . . . Colonel Washington says that he—Brown—was the coolest and firmest man he ever saw in defying danger and death. With one son dead by his side and another shot through, he felt the pulse of his dying son with one hand and held his rifle with the other, and commanded his men with the utmost composure, encouraging them to be firm and to sell their lives as dearly as they could."

The Democrats were in office in the Federal

Government with Mr Buchanan—a pliant tool, it will be remembered, in the hands of the extreme pro-slavery party—as President. They had majorities in both Houses. When they learned that Brown and some of his men were taken alive, they hurriedly dispatched a Committee of Democrats to examine them before the trial could take place, joyfully anticipating revelations which would implicate prominent Republicans, and so discredit that party in the eyes of all law-abiding citizens. The four members of the Committee were, Governor Wise, Senator Mason—author of the Fugitive Slave Law referred to in Chapter II.—both Southerners, and two Northerners, Mr Johnson a U. S. marshal, and Mr Vallandingham, Member of Congress for Ohio. Better for their party had they remained at home, for the publication of the interview caused a great revulsion of feeling in Brown's favour throughout the Northern States, and their inquiries failed entirely to secure any evidence of complicity with the raid on the part of any of their political opponents.

Senator Mason's first question was as to the source of the funds for the expedition. Brown replied that he furnished most of the money himself, and added: "It is by my own folly I have been taken. I could easily have saved myself from it if I had exercised my own better judgment rather than yielded to my feelings. I should have gone away, but I had thirty odd prisoners whose wives and daughters were in tears for their safety, and I felt for them. Besides, I wanted to allay the fears

of those who believed we came to burn and kill. For this reason I allowed the train to cross the bridge, and gave them full liberty to pass on. I did it only to spare the feelings of those passengers and their families, and to allay the apprehension that you had got here in your vicinity a band of men who had no regard for life and property, nor any feeling of humanity. . . . I did not allow my men to fire, or even to return fire, when there was danger of killing those we regarded as innocent persons, if I could help it."

VALLANDINGHAM. "Who sent you here?"

BROWN. "No man sent me here; it was my own prompting and that of my Maker."

MASON. "What was your object in coming?"

BROWN. "We came to free the slaves and only that."

MASON. "How do you justify your acts?"

BROWN. "I think, my friend, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity—I say it without wishing to be offensive—and it would be perfectly right for anyone to interfere with you so far as to free those you wilfully and wickedly hold in bondage. I think I did right and that others will do right who interfere with you, any time and at all times. I hold that the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as you would that others should do unto you,' applies to all who would help others to gain their liberty."

After admitting that he was at Cleveland in June, when the Fugitive Slave Law Convention was held

there, although he did not attend the Convention, he was asked whether he saw anything of Mr Joseph R. Giddings there. Giddings was for many years one of the ablest and most persistent opponents of slavery in the House of Representatives, and consequently most obnoxious to the Slave Party. When Lincoln became President he appointed him U. S. Consul at Montreal.

"I did meet him," said Brown.

VALLANDINGHAM. "Did you converse with him?"

BROWN. "I did. I would not tell you, of course, anything that would implicate Mr Giddings; but I certainly met with him and had a conversation with him."

VALLANDINGHAM. "Did you talk to Giddings about your expedition here?"

BROWN. "No, sir, I won't answer that, because a denial of it I would not make, and to make an affidavit of it I should be a great dunce."

VALLANDINGHAM. "Do you consider this a religious movement?"

BROWN. "It is, in my opinion, the greatest service a man can render to his God."

VALLANDINGHAM. "Do you consider yourself an instrument in the hands of Providence?"

BROWN. "I do."

VALLANDINGHAM. "Upon what principle do you justify your acts?"

BROWN. "Upon the Golden Rule. I pity the poor in bondage that have none to help them. That is why I am here. It is not to gratify any personal animosity, or feeling of revenge, or vindictive spirit.

It is my sympathy with the oppressed and the wronged, that are as good as you, and as precious in the sight of God."

When Stevens was asked a question which seemed dangerous to others, Brown, ever on the alert not to drag his friends down in his fall, said: "Be very cautious, Stevens, about an answer to that; it might commit some friend. I would not answer it at all." Stevens took his advice and, turning on his side, remained silent.

It may be added here that a committee appointed by the Senate in January 1860 to investigate the whole circumstances of Brown's attempt, although keenly on the alert for it, failed to procure any evidence of Republican responsibility for the raid. Indeed, on the contrary, the clearest evidence was adduced showing Brown's disgust with the "do nothing" policy of that party and of the Abolitionists generally. He saw the insufficiency of "moral suasion," and believed that no other means than the sword would secure emancipation.

He further said in the course of this extra-legal examination: "I want you to understand, gentlemen, that I respect the rights of the poorest and weakest of the coloured people oppressed by the slave system, just as I do those of the most wealthy and powerful. That is the idea that has moved me, and that alone. We expected no reward except the satisfaction of endeavouring to do for those in distress—the greatly oppressed—as we would be done by. The cry of distress, of the oppressed, is

my reason, and the only thing that prompted me to come here."

After much further questioning, Brown, who was lying on a miserable pallet suffering severely from his wounds, said:—"I do not wish to converse any more. I will only remark to these reporting gentlemen that I claim to be here carrying out a measure I believe to be perfectly justifiable, and not to act the part of an incendiary or ruffian, but, on the contrary, to aid those suffering under a great wrong. I wish to say, furthermore, that you had better—all you people of the South—prepare yourselves for a settlement of this question. It must come up for settlement sooner than you are prepared for it, and the sooner you commence that preparation the better for you. You may dispose of me very easily. I am nearly disposed of now; but this question is still to be settled—this negro question, I mean. The end of that is not yet.

"These wounds were inflicted upon me — both the sabre cut on my head and the bayonet stabs in the different parts of my body—some minutes after I had ceased fighting, and had consented to surrender for the benefit of others, not for my own benefit."

"Was your only object to free the negroes?"

BROWN. "Absolutely our only object."

"But you took Colonel Washington's silver and watch."

BROWN. "Oh, yes. We intended fully to have appropriated the property of slave-holders to carry

out our object. It was for that, and only that, and with no design to enrich ourselves with any plunder whatever."

Thus, with courtesy and even affability, Brown answered every questioner, in the midst of his keen sufferings as in the days of his health, anxious only to promote the one object to which he had devoted his life.

Mr Vallandingham said afterwards on his return to Ohio: "It is vain to underrate either the man or the conspiracy. Captain John Brown is as brave and resolute a man as ever headed an insurrection, and in a good cause and with a sufficient force would have been a consummate partisan commander. He has coolness, daring, persistency, the stoic faith and patience, and a firmness of will and purpose unconquerable. He is the farthest possible removed from the ordinary ruffian, fanatic or madman."

On the information of Governor Wise and two others, Brown and his men were put in the custody of Captain Avis of Charlestown Gaol, on the charge of "feloniously conspiring with each other, and other persons unknown, to make an Abolition insurrection, and open war against the commonwealth of Virgina; of murder; and 'conspiring with slaves to rebel and make insurrection.'" No time was lost in bringing them to trial. Indeed, the unseemly haste with which the whole proceedings were hurried on reflected no credit upon the judicial authorities of the State. They acted under the

influence of panic, and from manifest bias against the accused. Their intense hatred of Abolitionists made them partial judges in their own cause.

The same day—19th October—a warrant was issued to the Sheriff authorising him to summon a preliminary court of justices for Tuesday, 25th inst. Brown's first act on learning that he was to be examined on the 25th was to write to Judge Tilden of Massachusetts asking for assistance of counsel. As he shrewdly said, unless they could "obtain such counsel from without the Slave States, neither the facts in our case can come before the world, nor can we have the benefit of such facts as might be considered mitigating in the view of others upon our trial." By 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 25th, when they were taken into court, Brown had not been able to secure counsel. The prisoners were manacled in couples, Brown and Stevens being unable to stand without assistance, the latter having balls in his head, breast and arm. They were conducted from gaol to the court-house under a guard of eighty men, and a large military force was stationed around the building. Colonel Davenport presided, and Messrs C. B. Harding and Andrew Hunter were counsel for the prosecution. After the reading of the order for their commitment by the Sheriff, Brown was asked if he had a lawyer. He replied as follows:—

"Virginians, I did not ask for quarter at the time I was taken. I did not ask to have my life spared. The Governor of the State of Virginia tendered

me his assurance that I should have a fair trial; but under no circumstances whatever will I be able to attend to my trial. If you seek my blood, you can have it at any moment, without this mockery of a trial. I have no counsel. I have not been able to advise with anyone. I know nothing about the feelings of my fellow-prisoners, and am utterly unable to attend in any way to my own defence. My memory don't serve me. My health is insufficient, although improving. If a fair trial is to be allowed us, there are mitigating circumstances that I would urge in our favour. But if we are to be forced with a mere form—a trial for execution—you might spare yourselves that trouble. I am ready for my fate. I do not ask a trial. I beg for no mockery of a trial—no insult—nothing but that which conscience gives or cowardice would drive you to practise. I ask again to be excused from the mockery of a trial. I do not know what the special design of this examination is. I do not know what is to be the benefit of it to the commonwealth. I have now little further to ask, other than that I may not be foolishly insulted, as only cowardly barbarians insult those who fall into their power."

Without reply the court assigned Messrs C. J. Faulkner and L. Botts for the defence, and as both were Virginians and strong pro-slavery men, it is no wonder that Brown repeated his protest and asked for delay. This request was also ignored and witnesses were called. After eight

had been examined the court closed, the prisoners being committed for trial to the circuit court. This second court met immediately after the preliminary examination was over, and by 2 p.m. Judge Parker charged the grand jury. The next morning, Wednesday, 26th, the grand jury returned a true bill against all the prisoners, first for conspiring with negroes to produce insurrection; second, for treason to the commonwealth; and third, for murder. Brown looked rather better than on the previous day, the swelling round his eye having gone down. Before the indictment of the grand jury could be read he renewed his protest.

"I do not intend to detain the court, but merely wish to say, as I have been promised a fair trial, that I am not now in circumstances that enable me to attend a trial, owing to the state of my health. I have a severe wound in the back, or rather in one kidney, which enfeebles me very much. But I am doing well, and I only ask for a very short delay of my trial, and I think I may get able to listen to it; and I merely ask this, that, as the saying is, 'the devil may have his due'—no more. I wish to say, further, that my hearing is impaired, and rendered indistinct, in consequence of wounds I have about my head. I cannot hear distinctly at all. I could not hear what the court has said this morning. I would be glad to hear what is said on my trial, and am now doing better than I could expect to do under the circumstances. A very short delay would do all I would ask. I do not presume to ask

more than a very short delay, so that I may in some degree recover, and be able at least to listen to my trial, and hear what questions are asked of the citizens, and what their answers are. If that could be allowed me I should be very much obliged."

This application was supported by his counsel, but the court refused him even a day's delay. The afternoon sitting, to which Brown was carried on a mattress as he declared himself unable either to walk or stand, was occupied in securing a jury, which was finally composed in the main of farmers from distant parts of the State, the court refusing the services of all who were present at Harper's Ferry.

On Thursday morning, 27th, the trial proper began, the prosecution electing to take Brown's case first. He was assisted into court by two men, being unable to walk alone, and placed on a mattress within the bar. A plea of insanity was raised by some friends from the North before the jury was sworn, but Brown rejected it with indignation, and refused to allow it to be put in. He again, however, pleaded for delay, if only for twenty-four hours, as a lawyer to whom he had written in Ohio had telegraphed a reply, and his arrival was expected in the course of the day. But even this small measure of justice was denied him, and the trial was ordered to proceed at once. One counsel for the prosecution urged that he only wished for delay to allow his friends time to organise a rescue, and the other

went so far as to say that the prisoner "was merely shamming sickness." The representative of the Associated Press reported that: "The reason given for hurrying the trial is, that the people of the whole country are kept in a state of excitement, and a large armed force is required to prevent attempts at rescue."

Brown had good reason to wish for an advocate "from without the Slave States," as already he found himself with only one counsel, Faulkner, his chief counsel, having gone home. A Mr Green was appointed in his place. The morning was spent in a preliminary skirmish between the lawyers over the question of treason and the jurisdiction of the court, as Harper's Ferry was a U. S. arsenal. In the afternoon the examination of witnesses began, the conductor of the train being first called. He spoke of the stoppage of the train, and his subsequent interview with Brown, under the name of "Captain Smith," who accompanied him across the bridge to show that no treachery was intended. "When we got across, Brown said to me, 'You doubtless wonder that a man of my age should be here with a band of armed men; but if you knew my past history you would not wonder at it so much.' My train was then through the bridge, and I bade him good-morning, jumped on my train, and left him."

Colonel Washington described his arrest, testified that Brown allowed his prisoners to keep in a safe position, that he never spoke rudely or insultingly to them, that he allowed them to visit their families

to assure them of their personal safety, and that he heard Brown repeatedly direct his men not to fire on unarmed citizens. His evidence closed the proceedings for the day.

On Friday morning, 28th October, Colonel Washington offered some additional evidence, in which he said Brown frequently complained of the breach of faith in firing on his men while under a flag of truce, "but he heard him make no threat, nor utter any vindictiveness against them." The prosecution next put in the Provisional Constitution, and a bundle of letters and papers which they proposed to prove to be in Brown's handwriting by the evidence of the Sheriff, who knew it. Brown at once interrupted: "I will identify any of my handwriting, and save all that trouble. I am ready to face the music." Each letter was handed to him, and as he recognised the writing he said: "Yes, that is mine."

Then followed several of his prisoners, who each testified to the humane treatment they received at his hands, and to his repeated declaration that his one object was to free the slaves. "The good Book says we are all free and equal," was the summary of his argument.

The afternoon session was occupied mainly with the evidence of Henry Hunter — son of Andrew Hunter, conductor of the prosecution—concerning the murder of William Thompson, in which he had taken a leading part. Referring to their attempt to shoot Thompson in the parlour of the inn, witness

said: "I was cool about it, and deliberate; my gun was pushed up by someone who seized the barrel, and I then moved to the back part of the room, still with purpose unchanged, but with a view to divert attention from me, in order to get an opportunity, at some moment when the crowd would be less dense, to shoot him;" a purpose shortly afterwards accomplished. So deliberate and foul a murder drew no word of condemnation from the court, and no pro-slavery Southern paper was found to characterise it as it deserved.

Several witnesses for the defence were next called, but none responded, and the trial was apparently about to close, when Brown, rising from his pallet, addressed the court as follows.

"May it please the court:—I discover that, notwithstanding all the assurances I have received of a fair trial, nothing like a fair trial is to be given me, as it would seem. I gave the names, as soon as I could get them, of the persons I wished to have called as witnesses, and was assured that they would be subpœnaed. I wrote down a memorandum to that effect, saying where these parties were; but it appears that they have not been subpœnaed, so far as I can learn. And now I ask if I am to have anything at all deserving the name and shadow of a fair trial, that this proceeding be deferred until to-morrow morning; for I have no counsel, as I have before stated, on whom I feel I can rely; but I am in hopes counsel may arrive who will attend to seeing that I get the witnesses who are necessary

for my defence. I am myself unable to attend to it. I have given all the attention I possibly could to it but am unable to see or know about them, and can't even find out their names; and I have nobody to do any errands, for my money was all taken from me when I was sacked and stabbed, and I have not a dime. I had two hundred and fifty or sixty dollars in silver and gold taken from my pocket, and now I have no possible means of getting anybody to do my errands for me, and I have not had all the witnesses subpœnaed. They are not within reach, and are not here. I ask at least until to-morrow morning, to have something done, if anything is designed; if not, I am ready for anything that may come up."

Having delivered this speech, he immediately lay down again, drew his blanket over him, and closing his eyes appeared to fall asleep. A young Boston lawyer, Mr Hoyt, who had arrived that day as a volunteer counsel for Brown, strongly supported his plea for delay, stating that other counsel were expected that night. Whereupon the Virginian counsel who had charge of Brown's defence retired from the case, and the court adjourned.

In the course of the day, J. E. Cook of Owen Brown's party was brought into gaol from Chambersburg.

The court resumed on Saturday, 29th, at 10 a.m., when Brown had the assistance of two additional counsel, Mr T. Chilton of Washington, and Mr H.

Griswold of Ohio. Immediately the proceedings opened Mr Chilton stated that, as he had not yet had an opportunity of reading the indictment or evidence against his client, and as those who had previously had charge of the case had retired without his being able to consult with them, he asked the court in fairness to him and his colleagues to allow of an adjournment for a few hours so that they might understand the case. Mr Griswold supported but the court peremptorily refused their reasonable application.

Evidence for the defence was therefore proceeded with, witnesses being called from among Brown's prisoners. Three points were sought to be proved, viz., that Brown had treated his prisoners with every consideration, that he carefully avoided shooting unarmed prisoners, and that his only object was to free slaves. These propositions may be said to have been well established. A second time the defence asked for a short delay. Mr Chilton declared he was not sufficiently acquainted with the case to enter upon a defence, and as it was a question of life and death they ought not to be precipitate. Mr Hoyt in supporting said that for the last five days and nights he had only slept ten hours, and had once fallen unconscious from exhaustion and fatigue produced by his intense anxiety to prepare a sound defence. They promised not to occupy more than two hours and a half on Monday if the court would adjourn at this point. Again they were refused, and Mr Hunter

entered upon his closing speech for the prosecution. And yet the *New York Herald*, the Democratic organ of "Northern men with Southern principles" —then edited by James Gordon Bennett—declared that "he has received at the hands of justice and fair play all the delay he could possibly hope for."

On Monday, 31st, the trial was resumed for the last time. Brown's counsel did the best they could for him under the circumstances, but everyone knew the result was a foregone conclusion. After an absence of forty-five minutes the jury returned with their verdict of "Guilty."

"Guilty of treason, and conspiring and advising with slaves and others to rebel, and murder in the first degree?"

FOREMAN. "Yes."

Although many and bitter had been the curses heaped on Brown's head during the progress of the trial, there was dead silence now. Had Virginia an uneasy suspicion that, after all, this was but the beginning and not the end of her slavery troubles? And that the greatest were yet to come? They were slaying a hero; but thousands would speedily leap from the ground to take his place.

Mr Chilton moved for arrest of judgment on the ground of errors both in the indictment and verdict, and the motion was ordered to stand over until a subsequent day.

On 1st and 2nd November Edwin Coppock's trial was proceeded with. On the second day,

during the absence of the jury, Brown was unexpectedly brought into court. He had anticipated that all the prisoners would receive sentence at the same time, and was quite unprepared for the course adopted. In the gaslight his face showed a deathly pallor, he moved with difficulty and evident pain, and seating himself at the table by his counsel, he rested his head upon his hands, apparently indifferent to what was passing around him.

The judge read his decision on the motion for delay, refusing it absolutely. Then the clerk directed Brown to stand and say why sentence should not be passed upon him. He rose, and, resting his hands on the table, "in a voice singularly gentle and mild," spoke as follows:—

"I have, may it please the court, a few words to say. In the first place, I deny everything but what I have all along admitted—the design on my part to free slaves. I intended certainly to have made a clear thing of that matter, as I did last winter, when I went into Missouri, and there took slaves without the snapping of a gun on either side, moved them through the country, and finally left them in Canada. I designed to have done the same thing again, on a larger scale. That was all I intended. I never did intend murder, or treason, or destruction of property, or to excite or incite slaves to rebellion, or to make insurrection. I have another objection: and that is, it is unjust I should suffer such a penalty. Had I interfered in the manner which I admit, and which I admit

has been fairly proved (for I admire the truthfulness and candour of the greater portion of the witnesses who have testified in this case)—had I so interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent and so-called great, or in behalf of any of their friends, either father, mother, brother, sister, wife or children, or any of that class, and suffered and sacrificed what I have in this interference, it would have been all right, and every man in this court would have deemed it an act worthy of reward rather than punishment.

"This court acknowledges, as I suppose, the validity of the law of God. I see a book kissed here which I suppose to be the Bible, or, at least, the New Testament. That teaches me that 'all things whatsoever I would that men should do unto me, I should do even so to them!' It teaches me further to 'remember them that are in bonds as bound with them!' I endeavoured to act up to that instruction. I say, I am yet too young to understand that God is any respecter of persons. I believe that to have interfered as I have done, as I have always freely admitted I have done, in behalf of His despised poor, was not wrong, but right. Now, if it is deemed necessary that I should forfeit my life for the furtherance of the ends of justice, and mingle my blood further with the blood of my children, and with the blood of millions in this slave country whose rights are disregarded by wicked, cruel, and unjust enactments — I submit: so let it be done.

"Let me say one word further. I feel entirely satisfied with the treatment I have received on my trial. Considering all the circumstances, it has been more generous than I expected. But I feel no consciousness of guilt. I have stated from the first what was my intention, and what was not. I never had any design against the life of any person, nor any disposition to commit treason, or excite slaves to rebel, or make any general insurrection. I never encouraged any man to do so, but always discouraged any idea of that kind.

"Let me say, also, a word in regard to the statement made by some of those connected with me. I hear it has been stated by some of them that I have induced them to join me. But the contrary is true. I do not say this to injure them, but as regretting their weakness. There is not one of them but joined me of his own accord, and the greater part at their own expense. A number of them I never saw, and never had a word of conversation with, till the day they came to me, and that was for the purpose I have stated. Now I have done."

The judge immediately passed sentence, which was, that he should be hanged by the neck until he was dead on Friday, 2nd December.

On 16th November his counsel appealed to the Supreme Court, but the five judges of that court, without calling upon his counsel to address them, confirmed the decision of the court below.

Brown has been rather severely criticised for this final speech by several writers, on the ground that it

betrayed weakness, is contradicted in part by his letters and other speeches, and has passages in it unworthy of the heroic part he had hitherto played. They speak of its "lack of dramatic fitness," as though a man broken in health, sorely wounded and in bonds, and hurriedly called upon to plead for his life could be expected to have an eye for what would appeal to a critic's sense of fitness. If he had prepared his speech carefully beforehand, and had come into court expecting to deliver it, there might have been some justification for such criticisms. But being called upon, as he was, quite unexpectedly, and having to speak without notes on the spur of the moment, it needs no very partial judgment to say that he acquitted himself well. Doubtless, the disappointment of the critics is a tribute to Brown's real greatness, his usual level of moral courage causing them to expect an abnormally high standard of conduct from him. What discrepancy there was between one passage of this speech and his former statements was put right as soon as he knew of it by the following letter.

To Andrew Hunter, Esq.

"Charlestown, Va.,
"22*nd November* 1859.

"Dear Sir,—I have just had my attention called to a seeming confliction between the statement I at first made to Governor Wise and that which I made

at the time I received my sentence, regarding my intentions respecting the slaves we took about the Ferry. There need be no such confliction, and a few words of explanation will, I think, be quite sufficient. I had given Governor Wise a full and particular account of that; and when called in court to say whether I had anything further to urge, I was taken wholly by surprise, as I did not expect my sentence before the others. In the hurry of the moment I forgot much that I had before intended to say, and did not consider the full bearing of what I then said. I intended to convey this idea: that it was my intention to place the slaves in a condition to defend their liberties if they would, without any bloodshed, but not that I intended to run them out of the Slave States. I was not aware of any such apparent confliction until my attention was called to it, and I do not suppose that a man in my then circumstances should be superhuman in respect to the exact purport of every word he might utter. What I said to Governor Wise was spoken with all the deliberation I was master of, and was intended for truth; and what I said in court was equally intended for truth, but required a more full explanation than I there gave. Please make such use of this as you think calculated to correct any wrong impression I may have given. JOHN BROWN."

CHAPTER XIII

THE INTERIM

BEFORE giving the history of the few intervening days between the sentence and its execution, we will pause to look at the heavily-stricken family at North Elba, where anxious wives and children were enduring the slow agony of suspense. They had heard reports of the attack and its failure, of the deaths of Oliver and Watson, and the capture of John Brown, but it was not until the afternoon of 21st October that the first definite authentic news reached them, when a neighbour brought them a copy of the *New York Times* of the 18th.

Mr T. W. Higginson, from whose interesting account we have quoted in Chapter IV., had the mournful duty of carrying the complete account of the trial to the family, and of accompanying Mrs Brown on the first stages of her journey to Charlestown. Residing at the mountain farm, Mr Higginson found Mrs Brown, her son Salmon and his wife, her three daughters, aged respectively sixteen, thirteen and five, Annie, Sarah and Ellen, and the

THE COURT HOUSE, CHARLESTOWN, VA., WHERE JOHN BROWN AND HIS ASSOCIATES WERE TRIED AND SENTENCED.

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two young widows of Watson and Oliver, only sixteen and twenty years of age, the latter of whom died with her infant shortly afterwards. On a neighbouring farm lived Ruth, Brown's daughter by his first marriage, and sister to Owen who escaped. She was the wife of Henry Thompson whose two brothers fell in the attack, one of whom left a widow also living at North Elba. The narrative of the visit may be told mainly in Higginson's own words.

"Having had the honour of Captain Brown's acquaintance for some years, I was admitted into the confidence of the family. Everything that was said of the absent father and husband bore testimony to the same simple, upright character. Though they had been much separated from him for the last few years, they all felt it to be a necessary absence, and had not only no complaint to make but cordially approved it. Mrs Brown had been always the sharer of his plans. 'Her husband always believed,' she said, 'that he was to be an instrument in the hands of Providence, and she believed it too.' This plan had occupied his thoughts and prayers for twenty years. Many a night he had lain awake and prayed concerning it. Even now she did not doubt he felt satisfied, because he thought it would be overruled by Providence for the best. For herself, she said, she had always prayed that her husband might be killed in fight rather than fall alive into the hands of slave-holders, but she could not regret it now, in

view of the noble words of freedom which it had been his privilege to utter.

"As I sat that evening, with the women busily sewing around me, preparing the mother for her sudden departure on the morrow, some daguerreotypes were brought out to show me, and someone said: 'This is Oliver, one of those who were killed at Harper's Ferry.' I glanced up sidelong at the young fair-haired girl, who sat near me by the little table—a wife at fifteen a widow at sixteen, and this was her husband, and he was killed. As the words were spoken in her hearing, not a muscle quivered, and her finger did not tremble as she drew the thread. To the Browns, killing means simply dying, nothing more; one gate into heaven, and that one a good deal frequented by their family, that is all. There was no hardness about all this, no mere stoicism of will; only God had inured them to the realities of things. They were not supported by any notions of worldly honour or applause. They asked but one question: 'Does it seem as if Freedom were to gain or lose by this?' Principle is the word I brought away with me as most familiar in their vocabulary. That is their standard of classification. A man may be brave, ardent, generous; no matter—if he is not all this from principle, it is nothing. The daughters, who knew all the Harper's Ferry men, had no confidence in Cook, because 'he was not a man of principle.' They would trust Stevens

round the world, because 'he was a man of principle.' 'He tries the hardest to be good,' said Annie Brown, in her simple way, 'of any man I ever saw.'

"In the midst of all their sorrow, their strong and healthy hearts could enjoy the record of his conversation with the Virginians and applaud the keen, wise, simple answers which I read to them. . . . When, for instance, I read the inquiry: 'Did you go out under the auspices of the Emigrant Aid Society?' and the answer was, 'No, sir, I went out under the auspices of John Brown,' their voices cried eagerly, 'That's true,' or 'That's so.' And when it was related that the young Virginian volunteer taxed him with the want of military foresight in bringing so small a party to conquer Virginia, and the veteran imperturbably informed the young man that probably their views on military matters would materially differ, there was a general delightful chorus of 'That sounds just like father.' And his sublimer expressions of faith and self-devotion produced no excitement or surprise among them, since they knew in advance all that which we know now of him, and these things only elicited at times a half-stifled sigh, as they reflected that they might never hear that beloved voice again.

"I did not, of course, insult Mrs Brown by any reference to the charge of insanity against her husband; but she alluded to it herself with

surprise, and said if her husband were insane he had been consistent in his insanity from the first moment she knew him.

"It is natural for those who read this narrative to ask, what is the pecuniary condition of this household? It is hard to answer, because the whole standard is different as to such matters in North Elba and in Massachusetts. The ordinary condition of the Brown family may be stated as follows: They own the farm, such as it is, without incumbrance, except so far as unfelled forest constitutes one. They have ordinarily enough to eat of what the farm yields, namely, bread and potatoes, pork and mutton—not any great abundance of these, but ordinarily enough. They have ordinarily enough to wear, at least of woollen clothing, spun by themselves. But they have no money. When I say this I do not merely mean that they have no superfluous cash to go shopping with, but I mean almost literally that they have none. For nearly a whole winter, Mrs Brown said, they had no money with which to pay postage, except a tiny treasury which the younger girls had earned for that express object, during the previous summer, by picking berries for a neighbour three miles off.

"The reason of these privations simply was, that it cost money to live in Kansas in adherence to the cause of freedom, but not so much to live at North Elba; and therefore the women must

stint themselves that the men might continue their Kansas work. But when the father came upon his visits, he never came empty-handed, but brought a little money, some plain household stores, flour, sugar, rice, salt fish; tea and coffee they do not use. But what their standard of expense is may be seen from the fact that Mrs Brown seemed to speak as if her youngest widowed daughter was not totally and absolutely destitute, because her husband had left a property of five sheep, which would belong to her. These sheep, I found on inquiry, were worth, at that place and season, two dollars apiece; a child of sixteen, left a widow in the world, with an estate amounting to ten dollars! The immediate financial anxieties of Mrs Brown herself seemed chiefly to relate to a certain formidable tax bill, due at New Year's time; if they could only weather that, all was clear for the immediate future. How much was it, I asked, rather surprised that that wild country should produce a high rate of taxation. It was from eight to ten dollars, she gravely said; and she had put by ten dollars for that purpose, but had had occasion to lend most of it to a poor black woman, with no great hope of repayment. And one of the first things done by her husband, on recovering his money in Virginia, was to send her, through me, fifteen dollars to make sure of that tax bill.

"I spent but one night at the house, and drove

away with Mrs Brown in the early frosty morning, from that breezy mountain home which her husband loved — as one of them told me— 'because he seemed to think there was something romantic in that kind of scenery.' There was, indeed, always a sort of thrill in John Brown's voice when he spoke of mountains. I never shall forget the quiet way in which he once told me that 'God had established the Alleghany Mountains from the foundation of the world that they might one day be a refuge for fugitive slaves!' I did not then know that his own home was among the Adirondacks."

The next day, on the railway, Mr Higginson put into Mrs Brown's hands the newspaper containing the copy of the death-warrant. She read it, and then the tall, strong woman bent her head for a few minutes on the seat before her; then she raised it, and spoke as calmly as before.

On reaching Baltimore, Mrs Brown was met by a letter from her husband, under date 16th November, asking her to defer her visit for the present. Under the prevailing intense excitement he thought a visit neither wise nor desirable. Mrs Brown returned northwards and became the guest of Mr and Mrs Marcus Spring at Perth Amboy, New Jersey.

Theodore Tilton, a correspondent of the *New York Independent*, had an interview with her here, and thus describes his impressions.

"Ten minutes' acquaintance is enough to show

that she is a woman worthy to be the wife of such a man. She is tall, large and muscular, giving the impression at first sight of a frame capable of great strength and long endurance. Her face is grave and thoughtful, wearing even in this hour of her trial an expression of soberness rather than of sadness, as if, like her husband, she had long since learned how to suffer and be calm. Her manner is singularly quiet and retiring, although her natural simplicity and modesty cannot hide the evident force of character and strength of will and judgment which have fitted her so long to be a counsellor in her husband's enterprises, and a supporter in his trials. Notwithstanding the cares of her numerous family, and her many privations and struggles independent of household burdens, she still appears as fresh and hale as if she were only now in the prime and vigour of life.

"I adverted, in alluding to Captain Brown's religious opinions, to the common report that he was an Old-School Presbyterian. She replied that he had been a church member ever since he was a boy; that he united at sixteen years of age with a Congregational Church in Hudson, Ohio; and that on removing to Pennsylvania thirty years ago, he transferred his membership to the Presbyterian Church, with which he had since remained connected. She said that the religious element of his character had always been the ruling motive of his life. He had always

observed religious exercises in his household with exemplary regularity. It had been for many years the custom of the family to read the Bible every morning, in regular course of chapters, each member reading in turn a verse. She said that her husband's familiarity with texts of Scripture was so great that he could detect almost the slightest misquotation of any passage, and that if a portion of a verse in almost any part of the Bible were read or repeated to him, he could immediately repeat the remainder. His conversation frequently abounded with Scripture texts, and his letters were always filled with them.

"In his habits of living, his wife testified that he was always singularly self-denying. As an example, he never suffered himself or his family to wear expensive clothing. His standing admonition was, 'Let us save the money and give to the poor.' The day before yesterday, when some clothes were sent from New York to Mrs Brown, to go in a box to her husband, among the articles was a new coat of fine brown cloth, which, when it was shown to her, she immediately pronounced too gay for her husband to wear. It was accordingly sent back, and last evening there came instead a coarser coat, which would better suit his taste, and which he might not think too good for him to put on! He never in his life has used tobacco or ardent spirits, and never within the last few years has taken tea or coffee. His mode of living has been so rigidly temperate

that, in Kansas, he would sometimes go for days with scarcely a mouthful of food, and suffer no faintness or exhaustion.

"I referred incidentally to the design upon Harper's Ferry as having been premeditated for two years, to which she immediately replied, 'Not for two years, but for twenty! He had been waiting for twenty years for some opportunity to free the slaves; we had all been waiting with him the proper time when he should put his resolve into action; and when at last the enterprise at Harper's Ferry was planned, we all thought that the time had now come. Mr Brown was sanguine of success; we all were equally confident; he had no idea, nor had any of the family, that the experiment would result in defeat; we all looked to it as fulfilling the hopes of many years.' She shortly added: 'For he has borne the yoke of the oppressed, as if upon his own neck, for these thirty years.'

"She made several and repeated references to various newspaper accounts in which her husband's character had been misrepresented. She had been pained to see him described as a cruel man, for, she said, 'No man ever had a kinder heart; he is generous by nature; he has always aimed to impress his family with a spirit of benevolence; he has always taught his children to be unselfish—to act always for others before acting for themselves. His sympathies for the poor and the oppressed have always been too easily excited.'"

A box was being filled with clothing, writing materials, a few favourite books, delicacies, etc., and as friends pressed eagerly round it to have their contributions included, Mrs Brown quite broke down, and withdrawing to another part of the room, sobbed, "Poor man, he will not need them long!"

Mrs Brown next went to Philadelphia, where she became the guest first of Mr and Mrs J. Mott, and then of Mr J. Miller M'Kim, a correspondent of the *Anti-Slavery Standard*. We quote a paragraph or two from a long account published in that paper from M'Kim's pen.

"As for Mrs Brown herself, she is just the woman to be the wife of the hero of Harper's Ferry. Stalwart of frame and strong in native intellect, she is imbued with the same religious faith, and her heart overflows with the same sympathies. Her bearing in her present distress is admirable. She is brave without insensibility, tender without weakness; and though overwhelmed by the deepest sorrow, her sorrow is not as of one having no hope. Yet her hope is not that her husband will be reprieved, or have his sentence commuted, but that all he has done and is now doing will not only accrue to the benefit, but precipitate the triumph of the cause they have all had so much at heart."

She read eagerly all that the newspapers said of her husband, with the exception of the *New York Observer*. The *Observer* was the organ of the *Old-School Presbyterians*, a "religious" journal

bitterly opposed to all interference with slavery, and peculiarly offensive in its references to Abolitionists. Its editor was the Rev. S. I. Prime.

"That paper," said Mrs Brown, with unusual excitement, "that paper I cannot abide. I can read all that the Southern papers say, and all that is said in the *New York Herald*, but I cannot bear to read anything from the *New York Observer*." It is the fate of all genuine reformers to receive their severest wounds in the house of their friends.

But the after-time renders justice. Few "Old-School" or any other school Presbyterians but would be glad to-day to blot out that chapter from the history of their religious journalism.

But it is time we returned to our hero in Charlestown Gaol.

On 31st October, after the verdict had been pronounced, and he was waiting for the sentence which must soon follow, Brown commenced a letter to his family, the first he had written them since his capture. By the *P.S.* it is seen that it was not despatched until 3rd November, indicative, among other things, of the painful slowness with which he was only able to write. Several other letters indicate the same thing.*

* "See what a work this comparatively unread and unlettered man wrote within six weeks! He wrote in prison, not a *History of the World*, like Raleigh, but an American book which I think will live longer than that. What a variety of themes he touched on in that short space."—THOREAU.

First Letter from Prison. To his Family at North Elba.

"Charlestown, Jefferson County,
"Virginia, 31*st October* 1859.

"My dear Wife and Children, Every One,—I suppose you have learned before this, by the newspapers, that two weeks ago to-day we were fighting for our lives at Harper's Ferry; that during the fight Watson was mortally wounded; Oliver killed, William Thompson killed, and Dauphin slightly wounded; that on the following day I was taken prisoner, immediately after which I received several sabre cuts in my head and bayonet stabs in my body. As nearly as I can learn, Watson died of his wounds on Wednesday, the second, or on Thursday, the third, day after I was taken. Dauphin was killed when I was taken, and Anderson, I suppose, also. I have since been tried, and found guilty of treason, etc., and of murder in the first degree. I have not yet received my sentence. No others of the company with whom you were acquainted were, so far as I can learn, either killed or taken. Under all these terrible calamities I feel quite cheerful in the assurance that God reigns, and will overrule all for His glory and the best possible good. I feel no consciousness of guilt in the matter, not even mortification on account of my imprisonment and irons; and I feel perfectly assured that very soon no member of my family

will feel any possible disposition to 'blush on my account.' Already dear friends at a distance, with kindest sympathy, are cheering me with the assurance that posterity at least will do me justice. I shall commend you all together, with my beloved, but bereaved, daughters-in-law, to their sympathies, which I have no doubt will soon reach you. I also commend you all to Him 'whose mercy endureth for ever'—to the God of my fathers, 'whose I am, and whom I serve.' 'He will never leave you or forsake you,' unless you forsake Him. Finally, my dearly beloved, be of good comfort. Be sure to remember and to follow my advice, and my example too, so far as it has been consistent with the holy religion of Jesus Christ, in which I remain a most firm and humble believer. Never forget the poor, nor think anything you bestow on them to be lost to you, even though they may be as black as Ebedmelech, the Ethiopian eunuch who cared for Jeremiah in the pit of the dungeon, or as black as the one to whom Philip preached Christ. Be sure to entertain strangers, for thereby some have—'Remember them that are in bonds as bound with them!'

"I am in charge of a jailer like the one who took charge of 'Paul and Silas,' and you may rest assured that both kind hearts and kind faces are more or less about me, whilst thousands are thirsting for my blood. 'These light afflictions, which are but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' I

hope to be able to write you again. My wounds are doing well. Copy this, and send it to your sorrow-stricken brothers, Ruth, to comfort them. Write me a few words in regard to the welfare of all. God Almighty bless you all and make you 'joyful in the midst of all your tribulations.' Write to John Brown, Charlestown, Jefferson County, Va., care of Captain John Avis. — Your affectionate husband and father, JOHN BROWN.

"*P.S.*—Yesterday, 2nd November, I was sentenced to be hanged on 2nd December next. Do not grieve on my account. I am still quite cheerful. God bless you.—Yours ever, JOHN BROWN."

Two things appear to have been uppermost in his mind during this last month of his life; the future welfare of his family and the progress of the cause for which he had sacrificed his life. As numerous offers of sympathy and help reached him from all quarters, he wisely laboured to turn this feeling into practical channels, so that those whom he must soon leave behind might be saved from actual want.

To Mrs Maria Child, who offered to go to Charlestown to attend to his comfort, he wrote, 31st October, after thanking her for her offer:—

"Allow me to name to you another channel through which you may reach me with your sympathies much more effectually. I have at home

a wife and three young daughters—the youngest but little over five years old, the oldest nearly sixteen. I have also two daughters-in-law, whose husbands have both fallen near me here. There is also another widow, Mrs Thompson, whose husband fell here. Whether she is a mother or not, I cannot say. All these, my wife included, live at North Elba, Essex County, New York. I have a middle-aged son, who has been, in some degree, a cripple from his childhood, who would have as much as he could well do to earn a living. He was a most dreadful sufferer in Kansas, and lost all he had laid up. He has not enough to clothe himself for the winter comfortably. I have no living son, or son-in-law, who did not suffer terribly in Kansas.

"Now, dear friend, would you not as soon contribute fifty cents now, and a like sum yearly, for the relief of those very poor and deeply-afflicted persons, to enable them to supply themselves and their children with bread and very plain clothing, and to enable the children to receive a common English education? Will you also devote your own energies to induce others to join in giving a like amount, or any other amount, to constitute a little fund for the purpose named? I cannot see how your coming here can do me the least good; and I am quite certain you can do me immense good where you are. I am quite cheerful under all my afflicting circumstances and prospects; having, as I humbly trust, 'the peace of God which passeth all understanding,' to rule in my heart."

The same theme fills much of another letter which he wrote at this time to a Quaker lady of Rhode Island, who had written him a warmly sympathetic letter.

"*Tuesday, 1st November* 1859

"My dear Friend, E. B., of Rhode Island,—Your most cheering letter of 27th October is received, and may the Lord reward you a thousandfold for the kind feeling you express towards me; but more especially for your fidelity to the 'poor that cry, and those that have no help.' For this I am a prisoner in bonds. It is solely my own fault, in a military point of view, that we met with our disaster. I mean, that I mingled with our prisoners, and so far sympathised with them and their families that I neglected my duty in other respects. But God's will, not mine, be done. You know that Christ once armed Peter, so also in my case. I think He put a sword into my hand, and there continued it so long as He saw best, and then kindly took it from me; I mean, when I first went to Kansas. I wish you could know with what cheerfulness I am now wielding the 'sword of the spirit,' on the right hand and on the left. I bless God that it proves 'mighty to the pulling down of strongholds.' I always loved my Quaker friends, and I commend to their kind regard my poor, bereaved, widowed wife, and my daughters and daughters-in-law, whose husbands fell at my side.

One is a mother, and the other is likely to become so soon. They, as well as my own sorrow-stricken daughter, are left very poor, and have much greater need of sympathy than I, who, through Infinite Grace and the kindness of strangers, am 'joyful in all my tribulations.'

"Dear sister, write to them at North Elba, Essex County, New York, to comfort their sad hearts. Direct to Mary A. Brown, wife of John Brown. There is also another—a widow—wife of Thompson, who fell with my poor boys in the affair at Harper's Ferry, at the same place.

"I do not feel conscious of guilt in taking up arms; and had it been in behalf of the rich and powerful, the intelligent, the great—as men count greatness—of those who form enactments to suit themselves, and corrupt others, or some of their friends, that I interfered, suffered, sacrificed and fell, it would have been doing very well. But enough of this.

"These light afflictions, which endure for a moment, shall work out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. I would be very grateful for another letter from you. My wounds are healing. Farewell. God will surely attend to His own cause in the best possible way and time, and He will not forget the work of His own hands.—Your friend,

"JOHN BROWN."

On 2nd November, the day he received sentence,

two friendly visitors from Boston were allowed to see him, much to his gratification, in the persons of Judge Russell and his wife. A reporter, admitted to his cell the same day, said Brown was occupying himself with reading and writing. He expressed great admiration for Captain Avis, his gaoler, whom he declared to be one of the bravest men he ever saw, whose treatment of his prisoners was precisely what he should have expected from so just and humane a man. Brown further stated that he welcomed visitors, and that he was preaching constantly on the enormities of slavery. His wounds had all healed without suppuration, except the one on the back of his head, and the scars were scarcely visible. He attributed his very rapid recovery to his strictly abstemious habits throughout life. His visitor added: "He is really a man of imposing appearance, and neither his tattered garments, the rents in which were caused by sword cuts, nor his scarred face, can detract from the manliness of his mien. He is always composed, and every trace of disquietude has left him."

Another reporter who saw him on 3rd November said: "Brown's cheerfulness never fails him. He converses with all who visit him in a manner so free from restraint, and with so much unconcern, that none can doubt his real convictions of self-approval. His daring courage has strongly impressed the people, and I have more than once heard public avowals of admiration of his fearlessness, in spite of ominous murmurs of disapproba-

tion from bystanders. You at a distance," he continues, "can hardly form an idea of the rage for vengeance which is felt by the citizens of this place. The populace are resolute that their victims shall never be taken from them. Brown's own ideas on the subject are characteristic. He tranquilly says: 'I do not know that I ought to encourage any attempt to save my life. I am not sure that it would not be better for me to die at this time. I am not incapable of error, and I may be wrong; but I think that perhaps my object would be nearer fulfilment if I should die.' The only compunctions he expresses are in relation to his management at Harper's Ferry, by which he lost not only himself, but sacrificed his associates. It was, he says, his weakness in yielding to the entreaties of the prisoners, and thus delaying his departure, that ruined him. 'It was the first time that I ever lost command of myself, and now I am punished for it.'"

On the morning of Sunday, 6th, Mrs Spring of Perth Amboy, New Jersey, who entertained Mrs Brown on her way to Charlestown, visited the cell with her son. She found Brown still dressed in the clothes in which he was captured, lying on his bed, a cloth under his head being much stained with blood from a still open wound. He was calm and cheerful, discussed his plans and his hopes for the success of the cause. Twenty years he had laboured, waited and suffered; and at last he believed the time of fulfilment had come. But

he had failed; and instead of being free on the mountains, setting the oppressed at liberty, he was shorn of his strength and within prison walls. "I think I cannot now better serve the cause I love so much than to die for it; and in my death I may do more than in my life. I sleep as peacefully as an infant," he added, "or, if I am wakeful, glorious thoughts come to me, entertaining my mind. The sentence they have pronounced against me does not disturb me in the least, it is not the first time I have looked death in the face." Then, with a smile, "I have one unconquerable weakness: I have always been more afraid of being taken into an evening party of ladies and gentlemen than of meeting a company of men with guns."

On Tuesday, 8th, Mrs Spring visited him again. She found him sitting at a table just finishing the following letter to his wife and family, which he requested Mrs Spring to take with her. He looked better, brighter and happier than on the Sunday. The authorities had at last supplied him with fresh clothing. He talked only about his family, whom he commended to the kindness of all good friends.

The letter Mrs Spring took from him read as follows:—

"CHARLESTOWN, *8th November* 1859.

"DEAR WIFE AND CHILDREN, EVERY ONE,—I will begin by saying that I have in some degree re-

covered from my wounds, but that I am quite weak in my back, and sore about my left kidney. My appetite has been quite good most of the time since I was hurt. I am supplied with almost everything I could desire to make me comfortable, and the little I lack (some articles of clothing which I lost) I may perhaps soon get again. I am, besides, quite cheerful, having, as I trust, the peace of God which 'passeth all understanding,' to 'rule in my heart,' and the testimony (in some degree) of a good conscience that I have not lived altogether in vain. I can trust God with both the time and the manner of my death, believing as I now do, that for me at this time to seal my testimony for God and humanity with my blood will do vastly more towards advancing the cause I have earnestly endeavoured to promote, than all I have done in my life before. I beg of you all meekly and quietly to submit to this, not feeling yourselves in the least degraded on that account. Remember, dear wife and children all, that Jesus of Nazareth suffered a most excruciating death on the cross as a felon, under the most aggravating circumstances. Think also of the prophets and apostles, and Christians of former days, who went through greater tribulations than you or I; and try to be reconciled. May God Almighty comfort all your hearts and soon wipe away all tears from your eyes. To Him be endless praise. Think, too, of the crushed millions who 'have no comforter.' I charge you all never in your trials to forget the

griefs of 'the poor that cry, and of those that have none to help them.'

"I wrote most earnestly to my dear and afflicted wife not to come on for the present, at anyrate. I will now give her my reasons for doing so. First, it would use up all the scanty means she has, or is at all likely to have, to make herself and children comfortable hereafter. For let me tell you that the sympathy that is now aroused in your behalf may not always follow you. There is but little more of the romantic about helping poor widows and their children, than there is about trying to relieve poor 'niggers.' Again, the little comfort it might afford us to meet again would be dearly bought by the pains of a final separation. We must part, and, I feel assured, for us to meet under such dreadful circumstances would only add to our distress. If she comes on here, she must be only a gazing stock throughout the whole journey, to be remarked upon in every look, word and action, and by all sorts of creatures, and by all sorts of papers throughout the whole country. Again, it is my most decided judgment that in quietly and submissively staying at home vastly more of generous sympathy will reach her, without such dreadful sacrifice of feeling as she must put up with if she comes on. The visits of one or two female friends that have come on here have produced great excitement, which is very annoying, and they cannot possibly do me any good. O, Mary, do not come; but patiently wait for the meeting of those who love God and their fellow-men,

where no separation must follow. 'They shall go no more out forever.' I greatly long to hear from some one of you, and to learn anything that in any way affects your welfare. I sent your ten dollars the other day. Did you get it? I have also endeavoured to stir up Christian friends to visit and write to you in your deep affliction. I have no doubt that some of them, at least, will heed the call. Write to me, care of Captain John Avis, Charlestown, Jefferson County, Virginia.

"'Finally, my beloved, be of good comfort!' May all your names be 'written in the Lamb's book of life'—may you all have the purifying and sustaining influence of the Christian religion—is the earnest prayer of your affectionate husband and father,

"JOHN BROWN.

"*P.S.*—I cannot remember a night so dark as to have hindered the coming day, nor a storm so furious or dreadful as to prevent the return of warm sunshine and a cloudless sky. But, beloved ones, do remember that this is not your rest, that in this world you have no abiding place or continuing city. To God and His infinite mercy I always commend you.

"J. B."

The newspapers devoted a good deal of attention to the prisoner, and all representatives of pro-slavery organs, and, indeed, all sympathisers with slavery, were freely admitted into his cell. But it was usually with great difficulty and after much delay that any

of his friends from the North were allowed to see him. His customary attitude was one of frank and friendly intercourse, but when they filed two companies of State militia through his room, he rebelled, saying he objected "to be made a monkey show of."

The *New York Herald*, which — under the editorship of James Gordon Bennett, a persistent opponent of the anti-slavery crusade—was known as the organ of "Nothern men with Southern principles," freely admitted that Brown "awaited the result with that calm firmness which is the sure characteristic of a brave man. He is in the same cell with Stevens," it continues, "at whose bedside he is constantly found sitting, with the Bible (just closed as the visitor enters) placed upon his knees. This is the Bible he always carried with him. It was found after the final attack and recapture in the armoury at Harper's Ferry, and was restored by some kind person to its owner in captivity. It is almost needless to say that Brown awaits death with that resignation and tranquillity which disarm the dreaded phantom of all terror."

Another reporter says: "Brown's conversation is singularly attractive. His manner attracts everyone who approaches him, and while he talks he reigns. The other prisoners venerate him. Stevens sits in his bed, usually with his face away from the window, and listens all day to 'the Captain's' words, seldom offering a syllable except when called upon. Sometimes he gets a little excited, and springs

forward to make clear some point about which the Captain is in doubt ; but his five bullets in head and breast weigh him down, and he is soon exhausted. As for the other men — Copeland, Green and Coppock—they are always sending messages to 'the Captain' assuring him that it was not they who confessed . . . but Cook."

Governor Wise received a large number of threatening, anonymous letters, much to Brown's disgust. "Gentlemen," said he, "I tell you what I think of them. They come from no friends of mine. I have nothing to do with such friends. Why, gentlemen, of all things in the world that I despise, anonymous letters are the worst. If I had a little job to do, I would sooner take one half of the men I brought down here to help me, than as many of these fellows as could fill all Jefferson County, standing close upon every inch. If I don't get out of this gaol before such people as they take me out, I sha'n't go very soon."

Another class of men who roused his indignation was the ministers and clergy—apostles of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man—who supported slavery. And no wonder. Earnest reformers of all ages have been bitterly disappointed by the time-serving spirit which has been, alas, too prevalent amongst the clergy as a body. That there have always been notable exceptions will be gladly and gratefully admitted. But that numbers have prostituted their office and religion to the support of oppression, privilege and injustice is too painfully

apparent to any student of the history of great moral reforms. And the race is not—unhappily—extinct even yet, though becoming rarer.

Brown received several visits from slave-holding or slavery-upholding clergymen, and some interesting incidents of their interviews are left on record. He asked one divine who called to pray with him whether, if necessity required it, he was ready to fight for the freedom of the slave. No, said the good man. Then, said Brown, I will thank you to retire from my cell, your prayers would be an abomination to God. To another who came on the same errand he said he would not insult God by bowing down with anyone who had the blood of the slave upon his skirts. To a third, who had advanced an argument in support of slavery, Brown replied: "My dear sir, you know nothing about Christianity; you will have to learn the A B C in the lesson of Christianity, as I find you are entirely ignorant of the meaning of the word. Of course I respect you as a gentleman, but *it is as a heathen gentleman.*"

On the testimony of one of the officers of the gaol:—He said he did not recognise any slave-holder, lay or clerical, or any man sympathising with slavery, as a Christian. He would as soon be attended to the scaffold by blacklegs as by slave-holding ministers, or ministers sympathising with slavery; and that if he had his choice, he would prefer being followed to the scaffold by bare-footed, bare-legged, ragged negro children, and their old grey-headed slave mother, than by clergymen of this character.

When they visit him he argues with them, and frequently winds up by telling them that they, and all slaveholders and supporters of slavery, have far more need of prayers for themselves than he has, and he accordingly advises them to pray for themselves, and exhibit no concern about him. He adds that he does not wish to be understood as offering insult, but as expressing his firm conviction.

On Saturday and Sunday, the 12th and 13th, the interests of his family were again occupying his attention, and he was anxiously making such scanty provision for them as was within his power, as will be seen from the following letter to his half-brother Jeremiah. The old hero with proud confidence lifts his head and looks forward to a time when his fellows shall do him justice, and recognise his unselfish devotion to what he saw to be a duty supreme over all others.

"CHARLESTOWN, VIRGINIA,
"*12th November* 1859.

"DEAR BROTHER JEREMIAH,—Your kind letter of the 9th inst. is received, and also one from Mr Tilden, for both of which I am greatly obliged. You inquire, 'Can I do anything for you or your family?' I would answer that my sons, as well as my wife and daughters, are all very poor, and that anything that may hereafter be due me from my father's estate I wish paid to them, as I will endeavour hereafter to describe, without legal formalities to consume it all. One of my boys has been so entirely used up as very

likely to be in want of comfortable clothing for the winter. I have, through the kindness of friends, fifteen dollars to send him, which I will remit shortly. If you know where to reach him, please send him that amount at once, as I shall remit the same to you by a safe conveyance. If I had a plain statement from Mr Thompson of the state of my accounts with the estate of my father, I should then better know what to say about that matter. As it is, I have not the least memorandum left me to refer to. If Mr Thompson will make me a statement, and charge my dividend fully for his trouble, I would be greatly obliged to him. In that case you can send me any remarks of your own. I am gaining in health slowly, and am quite cheerful in view of my approaching end, being fully persuaded that I am worth inconceivably more to hang, than for any other purpose. God Almighty bless and save you all.—Your affectionate brother,

"JOHN BROWN.

"*P.S.*—13th November. Say to my poor boys never to grieve for one moment on my account; and should many of you live to see the time when you will not blush to own your relation to old John Brown, it will not be more strange than many things that have happened. I feel a thousand times more on account of my sorrowing friends than on my own account. So far as I am concerned, I 'count it all joy.' 'I have fought the good fight,' and have, as I trust, 'finished my course!' Please show this to any

of my family you may see. My love to all; and may God, in His infinite mercy, for Christ's sake, bless and save you all.—Your affectionate brother,

"J. BROWN."

Tuesday, 15th, was a busy time with him, as on that day, in addition to conversing with the usual influx of visitors, chiefly Southerners, he wrote two highly-important letters, each deeply interesting on one point, viz., that the utter failure of his enterprise had not shaken his faith in God, nor caused him to despair of the ultimate realisation of his dearest hopes. "God reigns," he declares to both correspondents with emphasis.

TO GEORGE ADAMS, BOSTON

"CHARLESTOWN, VA.,
"15*th November* 1859.

"MY DEAR SIR,—Your kind mention of some things in my conduct here which you approve is very comforting indeed to my mind. Yet I am conscious you do me no more than justice. I do certainly feel that through divine grace I have endeavoured to be 'faithful in a very few things,' mingling with even these much of imperfection. I am certainly 'unworthy even to suffer affliction with the people of God'; yet in infinite grace He has thus honoured me. May the same grace enable me to serve Him in a 'new obedience,' through my little remainder of this life, and to rejoice in Him for ever. I cannot

feel that God will suffer even the poorest service we may any of us have rendered Him or His cause to be lost or in vain. I do feel, 'dear brother,' that I am wonderfully 'strengthened from on high.'

"May I use that strength in 'showing His strength unto this generation,' and His power to every one that is to come. I am most grateful for your assurance that my poor, shattered, heart-broken 'family will not be forgotten.' I have long tried to recommend them to 'the God of my fathers.' I have many opportunities for faithful, plain dealing with the more powerful, influential and intelligent classes in this region, which, I trust, are not entirely misimproved. I humbly trust that I firmly believe that 'God reigns,' and I think I can truly say, 'Let the earth rejoice.' May God take care of His own cause and of His own great name, as well as of those who love their neighbours. Farewell.—Yours in truth, JOHN BROWN."

The next letter was read to Mrs Brown during her stay in Philadelphia, and the following paragraph from Mr M'Kim's article in the *Anti-Slavery Standard* may well introduce it.

"When the letter of Mr Brown to the Rev. Mr Vaill of Litchfield was read to her, which it was immediately after the paper came to hand containing it, she sat with form erect, and listened with deep but composed attention; but when the reader came to the passage where he says, 'I have lost my two

noble boys,' she dropped her head suddenly, as if pierced with an arrow, and for a while was overcome with emotion. She soon recovered herself, however, and wiping her eyes and resuming her erect position, indicated that she was ready to hear the rest."

Here is the letter.

To Rev. H. L. Vaill*

"Charlestown, Va., *November* 15, 1859.

"My dear, steadfast Friend,—Your most kind and most welcome letter of the 8th inst. reached me in due time.

"I am very grateful for all the good feeling you express, and also for the kind counsels you give, together with your prayers on my behalf. Allow me here to say that, notwithstanding 'my soul is amongst lions,' still I believe that 'God in very deed is with me.' You will not, therefore, feel surprised when I tell you that I am 'joyful in all my tribulations'; that I do not feel condemned of Him whose judgment is just, nor of my own conscience. Nor do I feel degraded by my imprisonment, my chains, or prospect of the gallows. I have not only been, though utterly unworthy, permitted to 'suffer affliction with God's people,' but have also had a great many rare opportunities for 'preaching righteousness in the great con-

* Brown's teacher in 1817 in the Morris Academy. He said Brown was "a godly youth."

gregation.' I trust it will not all be lost. The jailer in whose charge I am, and his family and assistants, have all been most kind; and notwithstanding he was one of the bravest of all who fought me, he is now being abused for his humanity. So far as my observation goes, none but brave men are likely to be humane to a fallen foe. Cowards prove their courage by their ferocity. It may be done in that way with but little risk.

"I wish I could write you about a few only of the interesting times I here experience with different classes of men—clergymen among others. Christ, the great Captain of liberty as well as of salvation, and who began His mission, as foretold of Him, by proclaiming it, saw fit to take from me a sword of steel after I had carried it for a time; but He has put another in my hand, 'the sword of the Spirit,' and I pray God to make me a faithful soldier wherever He may send me—not less on the scaffold than when surrounded by my warmest sympathisers.

"My dear old friend, I do assure you I have not forgotten our last meeting, nor our retrospective look over the route by which God had then led us; and I bless His name that He has again enabled me to hear your words of cheering and comfort, at a time when I, at least, am on the 'brink of Jordan.' (*See* Bunyan's Pilgrim.) God in infinite mercy grant us soon another meeting on the opposite shore. I have often passed under the rod of Him whom I call my Father; and certainly no son ever needed it oftener; and yet I have enjoyed much of life, as

I was enabled to discover the secret of this somewhat early. It has been in making the prosperity and happiness of others my own; so that really I have had a great deal of prosperity. I am very prosperous still, and looking forward to a time when 'peace on earth and goodwill to men' shall everywhere prevail; I have no murmuring thoughts or envious feelings to fret my mind. 'I'll praise my Maker with my breath.' Your assurance of the earnest sympathy of the friends in my native land is very grateful to my feelings; and allow me to say a word of comfort to them.

"As I believe most firmly that God reigns, I cannot believe that anything I have done, suffered, or may yet suffer, will be lost to the cause of God or of humanity. And before I began my work at Harper's Ferry I felt assured that in the worst event it would surely pay. I often expressed that belief, and can now see no possible cause to alter my mind. I am not as yet, in the main, at all disappointed. I have been a good deal disappointed as it regards myself, in not keeping up to my own plans; but I now feel entirely reconciled even to that; for God's plan was infinitely better, no doubt, or I should have kept to my own. Had Samson kept to his determination of not telling Delilah wherein his great strength lay he would probably have never overturned the house. I did not tell Delilah; but I was induced to act very contrary to my better judgment; and I have lost my two noble boys" (a passage rendered sacred

by a mother's tears) "and other friends, if not my two eyes.

"But 'God's will, not mine, be done.' I feel a comfortable hope that, like that erring servant of whom I have just been writing, even I may, through infinite mercy in Christ Jesus, yet 'die in faith.' As to both the time and manner of my death, I have but very little trouble on that score, I am able to be, as you exhort, 'of good cheer.'

"I send through you my best wishes to Mrs W. and her son George, and to all dear friends. May the God of the poor and oppressed be the God and Saviour of you all. Farewell, till we meet again.—Your friend, in truth,

"JOHN BROWN."

Wednesday, 17th, the day when his appeal to the Supreme Court was summarily dismissed by the unanimous verdict of five judges, he wrote another letter to his wife. This epistle is noteworthy as giving his ideas on the education of his children.

TO MRS BROWN, AT BALTIMORE

"CHARLESTOWN, VA., 16*th November* 1859.

"MY DEAR WIFE,—I write to you in answer to a most kind letter of November 13 from dear Mrs Spring. I owe her ten thousand thanks for her kindness to you particularly, and more especially

than for what she has done and is doing in a more direct way for me personally. Although I feel grateful for every expression of kindness or sympathy towards me, yet nothing can so effectually minister to my comfort as acts of kindness done to relieve the wants or mitigate the sufferings of my poor, distressed family. May God Almighty and their own consciousness be their eternal rewarders. I am exceedingly rejoiced to have you make the acquaintance and be surrounded by such choice friends as I have long known some of those to be with whom you are staying, by reputation. I am most glad to have you meet with one of a family (or, I would rather say, of two families) most beloved and never to be forgotten by me. I mean dear, gentle ——. Many and many a time have she, her father, mother, brother, sisters, uncle and aunt, like angels of mercy, ministered to the wants of myself and of my poor sons, both in sickness and in health. Only last year I lay sick for quite a number of weeks with them, and was cared for by all as though I had been a most affectionate brother or father. Tell her that I ask God to bless and reward them all for ever. 'I was a stranger, and they took me in.' It may possibly be that —— would like to copy this letter, and send it to her home. If so, by all means let her do so. I would write them if I had the power.

"Now, let me say a word about the effort to educate our daughters. I am no longer able to provide means to help towards that object, and it therefore becomes me not to dictate in the matter.

I shall gratefully submit the direction of the whole thing to those whose generosity may lead them to undertake it in their behalf, while I give anew a little expression of my own choice respecting it. You, my wife, perfectly well know that I have always expressed a decided preference for a very plain, but perfectly practical, education for both sons and daughters. I do not mean an education so very miserable as that you and I received in early life, nor as some of our children enjoyed. When I say plain but practical, I mean enough of the learning of the schools to enable them to transact the common business of life, together with that thorough training in good business habits which best prepares both men and women to be useful though poor, and to meet the stern realities of life with a good grace. You well know that I always claimed that the music of the broom, wash-tub, needle, spindle, loom, axe, scythe, hoe, flail, etc., should first be learned at all events, and that of the piano, etc., afterwards. I put them in that order as most conducive to health of body and mind; and for obvious reasons, that, after a life of some experience and much observation, I have found ten women as well as ten men who have made their mark in life right, whose early training was of that plain, practical kind, to one who had a more popular and fashionable early training. But enough of this.

"Now, in regard to your coming here; if you feel sure that you can endure the trials and the shock,

which will be unavoidable if you come, I should be glad to see you once more; but when I think of your being insulted on the road, and perhaps while here, and of only seeing your wretchedness made complete, I shrink from it. Your composure and fortitude of mind may be quite equal to it all; but I am in dreadful doubt of it. If you do come, defer your journey till about the 27th or 28th of this month. The scenes which you will have to pass through on coming here will be anything but those you now pass, with tender-hearted friends and kind faces to meet you everywhere. Do consider the matter well before you make the plunge. I think I had better say no more on this most painful subject. My health improves a little; my mind is very tranquil, I may say joyous, and I continue to receive every kind attention that I have any possible need of. I wish you to send copies of all my letters to all our poor children. What I write to one must answer for all, till I have more strength. I get numerous kind letters from friends in almost all directions, to encourage me to 'be of good cheer,' and I still have, as I trust, 'the peace of God to rule in my heart.' May God, for Christ's sake, ever make His face to shine on you all.—Your affectionate husband,

"JOHN BROWN."

On Thursday, 17th, he wrote to "My dear young Friend," Mr Musgrave, junr., of Northampton, Mass., who had written him a letter of sympathy, a courtesy

he always strove to acknowledge. "Tell your father," he said, "that I am quite cheerful—that I do not feel myself in the least degraded by my imprisonment, my chains, or the near prospect of the gallows. Men cannot imprison, or chain, or hang the soul. I go joyfully in behalf of millions that 'have no rights' which this great and glorious, this Christian Republic is 'bound to respect.' Strange change in morals, political as well as Christian, since 1776! I look forward to other changes to take place in God's good time, fully believing that 'the fashion of this world passeth away.'"

Friday, 18th, was a silent day, so far as we know; a welcome rest from correspondence which was still a painful operation, as the trembling handwriting of the above letters unmistakably showed. We can imagine him reading the Bible to Stevens, and preaching to the Virginians of the wickedness of slavery, and of God's impending judgment, which he confidently anticipated.

A cousin, the Rev. Luther Humphrey, having written him, he replied on Saturday, 19th. His letter contains one or two family and autobiographic touches which may be quoted:—

"So far as my knowledge goes as to our mutual kindred, I suppose I am the first since the landing of Peter Brown from the *Mayflower* that has either been sentenced to imprisonment or to the gallows. But, my dear old friend, let not that fact alone grieve you. You cannot have forgotten how and where our grandfather fell in 1776, and that he,

too, might have perished on the scaffold had circumstances been but a very little different. The fact that a man dies under the hand of an executioner (or otherwise) has but little to do with his true character, as I suppose. John Rogers perished at the stake, a great and good man, as I suppose; but his doing so does not prove that any other man who has died in the same way was good or otherwise. . . . I should be sixty years old were I to live to 9th May 1860. I have enjoyed much of life as it is, and have been remarkably prosperous, having early learned to regard the welfare and prosperity of others as my own. I have never, since I can remember, required a great amount of sleep; so that I conclude that I have already enjoyed full an average number of working hours with those who reach their threescore years and ten. I have not yet been driven to the use of glasses, but can see to read and write quite comfortably. But more than that, I have generally enjoyed remarkably good health. I might go on to recount unnumbered and unmerited blessings, among which would be some very severe afflictions, and those the most needed blessings of all. And now, when I think how easily I might be left to spoil all I have done or suffered in the cause of freedom, I hardly dare wish another voyage, even if I had the opportunity."

Sunday has left us no record. On Monday and Tuesday, 21st and 22nd, he was full of thoughts of home, of wife and children, of loving, anxious

solicitude for their future. No word of the three following letters can be spared. His consuming zeal for freedom was sympathetically understood by his children, who shared his hopes.

To Mrs Brown

"Charlestown, Va.,
"21*st November* 1859.

"My dear Wife,—Your most welcome letter of the 13th inst. I got yesterday. I am very glad to learn from yourself that you feel so much resigned to your circumstances, so much confidence in a wise and good Providence, and such composure of mind in the midst of all your deep afflictions. This is 'just as it should be'; and let me still say, 'Be of good cheer,' for we shall soon 'come out of all our great tribulations,' and very soon (if we trust in Him) 'God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.' Soon 'we shall be satisfied when we are awake in His likeness.'

"There is now here a source of much disquietude to me, viz., the fires are of almost daily and nightly occurrence in this immediate neighbourhood.* Whilst I well know that no one of them is the work of our friends, I know at the same time that by more or less of the inhabitants we shall be charged with them, the same as with the

* Due to the excitement among the slaves.

ominous and threatening letters to Governor Wise. In the existing state of public feeling, I can easily see a further objection to your coming here at present; but I did not intend saying another word to you on that subject. Why will you not say to me whether you had any crops mature this season? If so, what ones? Although I may never more intermeddle with your worldly affairs, I have not yet lost all interest in them. A little history of your success or of your failures I should very much prize; and I would gratify you and other friends some way, were it in my power. I am still quite cheerful, and by no means cast down. I remember that the time is short! The little trunk and all its contents, so far as I can judge, reached me safe.* May God reward all the contributors! I wrote you under cover to our excellent friend Mrs Spring on the 16th inst., I presume you have it before now. When you return, it is most likely the lake will not be open; so you must get your ticket at Troy for Moreau Station, or Glen Falls (for Glen Falls if you can get one), or get one for Vergennes in Vermont, and take your chance of crossing over on the ice to Westport. If you go soon the route by Glen Falls to Elizabethtown will probably be the best. I have just learned that our poor Watson lingered with his wound until Wednesday about noon of the 19th of October. Oliver died near my side in a few moments after he was shot. Dauphin died the

* "Poor man, he will not need them long," p. 206, *ante*.

next morning after Oliver and William were killed, viz., Monday. He died almost instantly—was by my side. William was shot by several persons. Anderson was killed with Dauphin.

"Keep this letter to refer to. God Almighty bless and keep you all.—Your affectionate husband,

"JOHN BROWN."

TO HIS CHILDREN AT NORTH ELBA

"CHARLESTOWN, VA.,
"22*nd November* 1859.

"DEAR CHILDREN ALL,—I address this letter to you, supposing that your mother is not yet with you. She has not yet come here, as I have requested her not to do at present, if at all. She may think it best for her not to come at all. She has (or will), I presume, written you before this. Annie's letter to us both, of the 9th, has but just reached me. I am very glad to get it, and to learn that you are in any measure cheerful. This is the greatest comfort I can have, except that it would be to know that you are all Christians. God in mercy grant you all may be so. That is what you all will certainly need. When and in what form death may come is of but small moment. I feel just as content to die for God's eternal truth, and for suffering humanity's, on the scaffold as in any other way; and I do not say this from any disposition to 'brave it out.' No; I would

readily own my wrong were I in the least convinced of it. I have now been confined over a month, with a good opportunity to look the whole thing as 'fair in the face' as I am capable of doing; and I now feel it most grateful that I am counted in the least possible degree worthy to suffer for the truth. I want you all to 'be of good cheer.' This life is intended as a season of training, chastisement, temptation, affliction and trial, and the 'righteous shall come out of' it all. Oh, my dear children! let me again entreat you all to 'forsake the foolish and live.' What can you possibly lose by such a course? Godliness with contentment is great gain, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come! 'Trust in the Lord and do good, so shalt thou dwell in the land; and verily thou shalt be fed.' I have enjoyed life much; why should I complain on leaving it? I want some of you to write me a little more particularly about all that concerns your welfare. I intend to write you as often as I can. 'To God and the word of His grace I commend you all.'—Your affectionate father,

"JOHN BROWN."

TO HIS SONS JOHN AND JASON, IN OHIO

"CHARLESTOWN, V.A,
"22*nd November* 1859.

"DEAR CHILDREN,—Your most welcome letters of the 16th inst. I have just received, and I bless

God that He has enabled you to bear the heavy tidings of our disaster with so much seeming resignation and composure of mind. That is exactly the thing I have wished you all to do for me—to be cheerful and perfectly resigned to the holy will of a wise and good God. I bless His most holy name that I am, I trust, in some good measure able to do the same. I am even 'joyful in all my tribulations,' ever since my confinement, and I humbly trust that 'I know in whom I have trusted.' A calm peace, perhaps like that which your own dear mother* felt in view of her last change, seems to fill my mind by day and by night. Of this neither the powers of 'earth or hell' can deprive me. Do not, dear children, any of you grieve for a single moment on my account. As I trust my life has not been thrown away, so I humbly trust that my death shall not be in vain. God can make it to be a thousand times more valuable to His own cause than all the miserable service, at best, that I have rendered it during my life. When I was first taken I was too feeble to write much; so I wrote what I could to North Elba, requesting Ruth and Anne to send you copies of all my letters to them. I hope they have done so, and that you, Ellen,† will do the same with what I may send to you, as it is still quite a labour for me to write all that I need to. I want your

* His first wife.
† Wife of John Brown, junr.

brothers to know what I write, if you know where to reach them. I wrote Jeremiah a few days since, to supply a trifling assistance, fifteen dollars, to such of you as might be most destitute. I got his letter, but do not know as he got mine. I hope to get another letter from him soon. I also asked him to show you my letter. I know of nothing you can any of you now do for me, unless it is to comfort your own hearts, and cheer and encourage each other to trust in God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent. If you will keep His sayings you shall certainly 'know of His doctrine whether it be of God or no.' Nothing can be more grateful to me than your earnest sympathy, except it be to know that you are fully persuaded to be Christians. And now, dear children, farewell for this time. I hope to be able to write you again. The God of my father take you for His children.—Your affectionate father, JOHN BROWN."

On Wednesday, 23rd, writing to Rev. Mr M'Farland, Wooster, Ohio, who had sent him an encouraging letter, he gave strong expression to his feelings with regard to the pro-slavery clergy.

"I would be glad to have you or any of my liberty-loving, ministerial friends here, to talk and pray with me. . . . You may wonder, are there no ministers of the Gospel here? I answer No. There are no ministers of Christ here. These

ministers who profess to be Christian, and hold slaves or advocate slavery, I cannot abide them. My knees will not bend in prayer with them while their hands are stained with the blood of souls. . . . I think I feel as happy as Paul did when he lay in prison. He knew if they killed him it would greatly advance the cause of Christ; that was the reason he rejoiced so. On that same ground 'I do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.' Let them hang me; I forgive them, and may God forgive them, for they know not what they do. I have no regret for the transaction for which I am condemned. I went against the laws of men, it is true; but 'whether it be right to obey God or men, judge ye.' Christ told me to remember them that are in bonds as bound with them, to do towards them as I would wish them to do towards me in similar circumstances. My conscience bade me do that. I tried to do it, but failed. Therefore I have no regret on that score. I have no sorrow either as to the result, only for my poor wife and children. They have suffered much, and it is hard to leave them uncared for. But God will be a husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless."

On Thursday, 24th, his ever-apprehensive captors proclaimed martial law, General Taliaferro being placed in supreme command until after the execution. The Virginia State Government seized the telegraph, searched each train as it entered the State, and put it under guard until it reached the

borders again, and for the first time in the history of the Union introduced the passport system.

Meanwhile the cause of all these elaborate precautions was thinking of very different matters from attempts to escape and rescues. He was writing: "I have had many interesting visits from pro-slavery persons, almost daily, and I endeavour to improve them faithfully, plainly and kindly. I do not think I ever enjoyed life better than since my confinement here. . . . I wish I could only know that all my poor family were as composed and as happy as I."

And to Mr G. H. Hoyt, the young lawyer who so heartily entered into his cause at the trial, he was saying: "I commend my poor family to the kind remembrance of all friends, but I well understand that they are not the only poor in our world. I ought to begin to leave off saying 'our world.'"

At last, on Friday, 25th, he has brought his mind to consent to a final interview with his faithful, well-beloved wife. His hesitation had arisen from a desire to save her unnecessary pain and exposure to the public gaze. Mrs Brown was still at Philadelphia, and after expressing his pleasure at learning she was meeting with so many kind friends, he proceeds:—

"I have just received from Mr John Jay, of New York, a draft for fifty dollars for the benefit of my family, and will enclose it made payable to your order. I have also fifteen dollars to send to our crippled and destitute unmarried son; when I can

I intend to send you, by express, two or three little articles to carry home. Should you happen to meet with Mr Jay, say to him that you fully appreciate his great kindness both to me and my family. God bless all such friends. It is out of my power to reply to all the kind and encouraging letters I get; I wish I could do so. I have been so much relieved from my lameness for the last three or four days, as to be able to sit up to read and write pretty much all day, as well as part of the night; and I do assure you and all other friends that I am quite busy, and none the less happy on that account. The time passes quite pleasantly, and the near approach of my great change is not the occasion of any particular dread. . . . I am inclined to think you will not be likely to succeed well about getting away the bodies of your family; but should that be so, do not let that grieve you. It can make but little difference what is done with them.

"You can well remember the changes you have passed through. Life is made up of a series of changes, and let us meet them in the best manner possible. You will not wish to make yourself and children more burdensome to friends than you are really compelled to do. I would not.

"I will close this by saying that, if you now feel that you are equal to the undertaking, do exactly as you feel disposed to do about coming to see me before I suffer. I am entirely willing. Your affectionate husband, JOHN BROWN."

Sunday, 27th, his last Sunday on earth, has left us two letters. The first, which we need not quote, heaves a sigh of relief that his efforts on behalf of his family are at last rewarded with some measure of success. It "takes from my mind the greatest burden I have felt since my imprisonment, to feel assured that, in some way, my shattered and broken-hearted wife and children will be so far relieved as to save them from great physical suffering."

The second is to a young lady correspondent, Miss Sterns, of Springfield. "It is exceedingly gratifying to learn from friends that there are not wanting in this generation some to sympathise with me and appreciate my motive, even now that I am whipped. Success is in general the standard of all merit. I have passed my time here quite cheerfully, still trusting that neither my life nor my death will prove a total loss. As regards both, however, I am liable to mistake. It affords me some satisfaction to feel conscious of having at least tried to better the condition of those who are always on the under-hill side, and am in hope of being able to meet the consequences without a murmur. I am endeavouring to get ready for another field of action, where no defeat befalls the truly brave. That God reigns, and most wisely, and controls all events, might, it would seem, reconcile those who believe it to much that appears to be very disastrous. I am one who tried to believe that, and still keep trying. Those who die for the

truth may prove to be courageous at last; so I continue 'hoping on,' till I shall find that the truth must finally prevail. I do not feel in the least degree despondent or degraded by my circumstances, and I entreat my friends not to grieve on my account. You will please excuse a very poor and short letter, as I get more than I can possibly answer."

Whilst John Brown was on Monday, 28th, writing the letter to Judge Tilden of Massachusetts, quoted below, Mrs Brown received in Philadelphia the order of Governor Wise for the delivery to her, in response to her urgent request, of the bodies of her two sons, Watson and Oliver, and her husband's after execution. One who was present when she received the communication said: "It annihilated in an instant the last hope of her heart. She had said she had no hope. In that terrible moment she learned how tenaciously she had grasped the shadow of one. Strong soul as she is, she was overwhelmed by the surges of her grief; and who could comfort her? But she has sources of strength which the world knows not of, and they have never failed her, and never will. She is never so unnerved that she would save her husband's life, were it possible, by a mean or wicked act. It was delightful to hear the quiet, matter-of-course way in which she said, when a gleam of hope had fallen on her heart from the report that a case of insanity might be made out: 'But I couldn't say, if I were called upon, that my husband was insane—even

to save his life, because he wasn't;' as if the utterance of an untruth were a natural as well as a moral impossibility to her."

It is interesting to note that both husband and wife on this day repudiated the plea of insanity which had been put forward by some friends in the hope of saving him.

To Judge Tilden

"Charlestown, Va.,
"*Monday, 28th November* 1859.

"My dear Sir,—Your most kind and comforting letter of the 23rd inst. is received. I have no language to express the feelings of gratitude and obligation I am under for your kind interest in my behalf ever since my disaster.

"The great bulk of mankind estimate each other's actions and motives by the measure of success or otherwise that attends them through life. By that rule I have been one of the worst and one of the best of men. I do not claim to have been one of the latter; and I leave it to an impartial tribunal to decide whether the world has been the worse or the better of my living and dying in it. My present great anxiety is to get as near in readiness for a different field of action as I well can, since being in a good measure relieved from the fear that my poor, broken-hearted wife and children would come to immediate want. May God reward a

thousandfold all the kind efforts made in their behalf. I have enjoyed remarkable cheerfulness and composure of mind ever since my confinement, and it is a great comfort to feel assured that I am permitted to die for a cause ; not merely to pay the debt of nature—as all must. I feel myself to be most unworthy of so great distinction. The particular manner of dying assigned to me gives me but very little uneasiness. I wish I had the time and the ability to give you, my dear friend, some little idea of what is daily and, I might almost say, hourly passing within my prison walls; and could my friends but witness only a few of those scenes, just as they occur, I think they would feel very well reconciled to my being here, just what I am, and just as I am. My whole life before had not afforded me one half the opportunity to plead for the right. In this, also, I find much to reconcile me to both my present condition and my immediate prospect. I may be very insane, and I am so if insane at all. But, if that be so, insanity is like a very pleasant dream to me. I am not in the least degree conscious of my ravings, of my fears, or of any terrible visions whatever; but fancy myself entirely composed ; and that my sleep, in particular, is as sweet as that of a healthy, joyous little infant. I pray God that He will grant me a continuance of the same calm but delightful dream, until I come to know of those realities which eyes have not seen, and which ears have not heard. I have scarce realised that I am in prison or in irons at

all. I certainly think I was never more cheerful in my life.

"I intend to take the liberty of sending, by express, to your care some trifling articles for those of my family who may be in Ohio, which you can hand to my brother Jeremiah when you may see him, together with fifteen dollars I have asked him to advance to them. Please excuse me so often troubling you with my letters, or any of my matters. Please also remember me most kindly to Mr Griswold, and to all others who love their neighbours. I write Jeremiah to your care.—Your friend, in truth, JOHN BROWN."

To a merchant in Charlestown—whose name has not transpired—from whom he had received many little kindnesses, Brown this day, 29th, presented a Bible with the following inscription on the fly leaf.

"With the best wishes of the undersigned, and his sincere thanks for many acts of kindness received. There is no commentary in the world so good in order to a right understanding of this blessed Book as an honest, child-like and teachable spirit.

"JOHN BROWN.

"CHARLESTOWN, 29*th November* 1859."

Wednesday, 30th. Mrs Brown set out at last on her sad journey, and, accompanied by Messrs Miller M'Kim and Hector Tyndale, reached Harper's Ferry in the evening. Her intention was to leave

early the next morning for Charlestown, but the authorities directed her to remain until she received further orders from them.

Ignorant of her movements, and of her proximity, Brown spent the day in writing his last letter to his family.

"CHARLESTOWN PRISON, VA.,
"*30th November* 1859.

"MY DEARLY-BELOVED WIFE, SONS AND DAUGHTERS, EVERY ONE,—As I now begin probably what is the last letter I shall ever write to any of you, I conclude to write to all at the same time. I will mention some little matters particularly applicable to little property concerns in another place.

"I recently received a letter from my wife, from near Philadelphia, dated 22nd November, by which it would seem that she was about giving up the idea of seeing me again. I had written her to come on if she felt equal to the undertaking, but I do not know that she will get my letter in time. It was on her own account chiefly that I asked her to stay back. At first I had a most strong desire to see her again, but there appeared to be very serious objections; and should we never meet in this life, I trust that she will in the end be satisfied it was for the best, at least, if not most for her comfort.

"I am waiting the hour of my public murder with

great composure of mind and cheerfulness, feeling the strong assurance that in no other possible way could I be used to so much advantage to the cause of God and of humanity, and that nothing that either I or all my family have sacrificed or suffered will be lost. The reflection that a wise and merciful as well as just and holy God rules not only the affairs of this world but of all worlds, is a rock to set our feet upon under all circumstances—even those more severely trying ones in which our own feelings and wrongs have placed us. I have now no doubt but that our seeming disaster will ultimately result in the most glorious success. So, my dear shattered and broken family, be of good cheer, and believe and trust in God with all your heart and with all your soul; for He doeth all things well. Do not feel ashamed on my account, nor for one moment despair of the cause or grow weary in well-doing. I bless God I never felt stronger confidence in the certain and near approach of a bright morning and glorious day than I have felt, and do now feel, since my confinement here. I am endeavouring to return, like a poor prodigal as I am, to my Father, against whom I have always sinned, in the hope that He may kindly and forgivingly meet me, though a very great way off.

"Oh, my dear wife and children, would to God you could know how I have been travailing in birth for you all, that no one of you may fail of the grace of God through Jesus Christ; that no one of you may be blind to the truth and glorious light

of His Word, in which life and immortality are brought to light. I beseech you, every one, to make the Bible your daily and nightly study, with a child-like, honest, candid, teachable spirit of love and respect for your husband and father. And I beseech the God of my fathers to open all your eyes to the discovery of the truth. You cannot imagine how much you may soon need the consolations of the Christian religion. Circumstances like my own for more than a month past have convinced me, beyond all doubt, of my own great need of some theories treasured up, when our prejudices are excited, our vanity worked up to the highest pitch. Oh, do not trust your eternal all upon the boisterous ocean, without even a helm or compass to aid you in steering! I do not ask of you to throw away your reason; I only ask you to make a candid, sober use of your reason.

"My dear young children, will you listen to this last poor admonition of one who can only love you? Oh, be determined at once to give your whole heart to God, and let nothing shake or alter that resolution. You need have no fears of regretting it. Do not be vain and thoughtless, but sober-minded; and let me entreat you all to love the whole remnant of our once great family. Try and build up again your broken walls, and to make the utmost of every stone that is left. Nothing can so tend to make life a blessing as the consciousness that your life and example bless and leave others stronger. Still, it is ground of the

utmost comfort to my mind to know that so many of you as have had the opportunity have given some proof of your fidelity to the great family of men. Be faithful unto death; from the exercise of habitual love to man it cannot be very hard to love his Maker.

"I must yet insert the reason for my firm belief in the Divine inspiration of the Bible, notwithstanding I am, perhaps, naturally sceptical — certainly not credulous. I wish all to consider it most thoroughly when you read that blessed Book, and see whether you cannot discover such evidence yourselves. It is the purity of heart, filling our minds as well as work and actions, which is everywhere insisted on, that distinguishes it from all the other teachings, that commends it to my conscience. Whether my heart be willing and obedient or not, the inducement that it holds out is another reason of my conviction of its truth and genuineness; but I do not here omit this my last argument on the Bible, that eternal life is what my soul is panting after this moment. I mention this as a reason for endeavouring to leave a valuable copy of the Bible, to be carefully preserved in remembrance of me, to so many of my posterity, instead of some other book at equal cost.

"I beseech you all to live in habitual contentment with moderate circumstances and gains of worldly store, and earnestly to teach this to your children and children's children after you, by example as well as precept. Be determined to know by experience, as soon as may be, whether Bible instruc-

tion is of Divine origin or not. Be sure to owe no man anything, but to love one another. John Rogers wrote to his children: 'Abhor that arrant whore of Rome.' John Brown writes to his children to abhor, with undying hatred also, that sum of all villanies—slavery. Remember, 'he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty,' and 'he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.' Remember also that 'they being wise shall shine, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.'

"And now, dearly-beloved family, to God and the work of His grace I commend you all.—Your affectionate husband and father,

"JOHN BROWN."

Thursday, 1st December. Brown's last full day in the world. The morning he spent in preparing his will, still ignorant that he was once more to see his 'dearly-beloved wife.' For several hours she was detained at Harper's Ferry whilst telegraphic communications were passing between Richmond, Charlestown and Harper's Ferry, the result being that General Taliaferro stated he had sent a file of dragoons to escort Mrs Brown, but that her companions must come no farther.

In Charlestown great military preparations were made, and at four o'clock, when the grief-stricken wife arrived at the town, she had to proceed to the gaol between rows of bayonets, flanked by pieces of artillery. Whilst Mrs Avis searched Mrs Brown

for any concealed weapons, General Taliaferro informed the prisoner that his wife had arrived, and was to be allowed to see him, asking how long an interview they required.

"Not long," said Brown; "three or four hours will do."

"I am very sorry, Captain Brown," replied the General, "that I cannot oblige you. Mrs Brown must return to-night to Harper's Ferry."

"Well," answered Brown, "I ask nothing of you, sir, I beg nothing from the State of Virginia. Carry out your orders, General, that is enough. I am content."

Mrs Brown was led into the cell by the jailer. Her husband rose as she entered, and received her in his arms. For some minutes they stood speechless, Mrs Brown resting her head on her husband's breast, and clasping his neck. At length they sat down and conversed. Captain Avis, who was present, gave the following particulars of the interview.*

Brown spoke first. "Wife, I am glad to see you."

"My dear husband! it is a hard fate."

"Well, well! cheer up, cheer up, Mary. We must all bear it in the best manner we can. I believe it is all for the best."

"Our poor children—God help them!"

"Those that are dead to this world are angels in another. How are all those still living? Tell

* Quoted by Webb. *Life*, p. 312.

them their father died without a single regret for the course he has pursued—that he is satisfied he is right in the eyes of God and of all just men."

Mrs Brown then spoke of their remaining children and their home. Brown's voice, as he alluded to the bereavements of his family, was broken with emotion.

Mrs Brown observed the chain about the ankles of her husband. To prevent it from chafing his flesh he had put on two pairs of woollen socks. She said she was anxious to secure the chain as a family relic. She already had at home the one in which John Brown, junr., was shackled in Kansas. Brown said he had asked Governor Wise for it, but had been refused.

They next discussed business matters and Brown explained the details of his will. He also handed over to his wife all his letters and papers. Then they supped together, or made pretence of doing so, and Mrs Brown asked to be allowed to see the other prisoners. This was prohibited by express orders from the General, but Captain Avis offered to allow her to see them on his own responsibility. Mrs Brown declined to see them under the circumstances.

Then an order arrived from Taliaferro saying the interview must end. Brown then said: "I hope you will be able to get all our children together, and impress the inculcation of right principles on each succeeding generation. I give you all the letters and papers which have been sent me since

my arrest. I wish you also to take all my clothes that are here, and carry them home. Good-bye, good-bye. God bless you!" So parted a true hero and heroine.

Mrs Brown was then escorted back to Harper's Ferry, and arrived there about nine o'clock, greatly exhausted, prostrate with grief.

CHAPTER XIV

MARTYRDOM

FRIDAY, 2nd December 1859, broke bright and clear, showing a cloudless sky. In a field about half a mile from the gaol, by 7 o'clock carpenters were at work erecting the scaffold. It was six feet high, twelve wide and about eighteen in length. A hand-rail extended round three sides and down a flight of steps. On the fourth side strong uprights supported a cross beam, from the centre of which a rope was suspended, attached to an iron hook. By 8 o'clock troops began to arrive on the ground, both infantry, cavalry and artillery being present to the number of over 3000. Some 500 immediately surrounded the scaffold, the remainder being dispersed over the field. In addition to these, sentries and patrols guarded the roads for miles around, to prevent any attempt at rescue. A large brass cannon was loaded with grape-shot and trained on the spot where the condemned man would stand. Others commanded every approach to the gaol. Not more than 400 civilians are said to have been witnesses of the final scene.

Brown had risen at daybreak and immediately

THE KENNEDY FARM HOUSE SHOWING JOHN BROWN IN HIS FAVOURITE SEAT.

[*It was here he collected his men and arms for the Raid.*]

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resumed his correspondence, which included the following last wishes to his family; duly honoured by them.

To be Inscribed on the Family Monument at North Elba

Oliver Brown, born 1839, was killed at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, 17th November 1859.

Watson Brown, born 1835, was wounded at Harper's Ferry, 17th November, and died 19th November 1859. (My wife can fill up the blank dates as above.)

John Brown, born 9th May 1800, was executed at Charlestown, Virginia, 2nd December 1859.

He also added the following codicil to his will:—

"Charlestown, Jefferson Co., Virginia,
"*2nd December* 1859.

"It is my desire that my wife have all my personal property not previously disposed of by me; and the entire use of all my landed property during her natural life; and that after her death the proceeds of such land be equally divided between my then living children; and that what would be a child's share be given to the children of each of my two sons who fell at Harper's Ferry, and that a child's share be divided among the children of my now living children

who may die before their mother (my present beloved wife). No formal will can be of use when my express wishes are made known to my dutiful and beloved family. JOHN BROWN."

"MY DEAR WIFE,—I have time to enclose the within and the above, which I forgot yesterday, and to bid you another farewell. 'Be of good cheer,' and God Almighty bless, save, comfort, guide and keep you to the end.—Your affectionate husband,

"JOHN BROWN."

At 10.30 the sheriff entered the cell to bid him farewell. A few minutes were allowed him for final interviews with his doomed companions. He saw the two negroes first, Shields Green and John Copeland, whom he encouraged to "stand up like men and not betray their friends." He saw J. E. Cook and E. Coppock next, to the former of whom alone he spoke in anything like his stern manner, because of the confession by which he had vainly hoped to obtain pardon, in which he had made some statements not accurate. Aaron D. Stevens, his cell companion until the previous day, he saw last, and took of him an affectionate farewell.

"Good-bye, Captain," said Stevens. "I know you are going to a better land."

"I know I am," said Brown.

As he had been informed he would not be allowed to make any statement from the scaffold, he placed a slip of paper in the hands of the officials con-

taining these prophetic lines, his last written words:—

"I, John Brown, am now quite *certain* that the crimes of this *guilty land* will never be purged away but with *blood.* I had, as I now think vainly, flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done."

At eleven o'clock he stepped out of gaol with a bright, serene countenance, holding his head like a victorious hero going to his reward. Close to the door stood a negro woman with a child in her arms.

He stopped, and, stooping down, kissed the chubby black face of the infant. And Whittier sang:—

"John Brown of Ossawattomie
They led him out to die;
And lo! a poor slave mother
With her little child press'd nigh.

Then the bold blue eye grew tender,
And the old harsh face grew mild,
As he stooped between the jeering ranks,
And kissed the negro's child.

The shadows of his stormy life
That moment fell apart,
And they who blamed the bloody hand,
Forgave the loving heart;

That kiss from all its guilty means
Redeem'd the good intent,
And round the grisly fighter's hair
The martyr's aureole bent."

Andrew Hunter, the prosecuting counsel, in his

old age wrote an article on Brown's trial and execution, which appeared in the New Orleans *Times—Democrat*, of 5th September 1887, and almost savagely denied that any such incident took place. But it was universally accepted as true at the time. In the waggon sat the driver with the undertaker in front, Captain Avis and his charge behind, with the walnut coffin enclosed in a plain poplar box, ready for the journey to the North, near to them. The driver was Gallagher, one of the correspondents of the *New York Herald*, who had secured the post as a means of serving his paper. They were surrounded by several companies of cavalry.

One asked as they started whether Captain Brown could endure his fate.

"I can endure almost anything but parting from friends," he said; "that is very hard."

As his eye fell on the soldiers he straightened himself up proudly, suggesting to the onlookers that he desired to set them an example of a soldier's courage. As they ascended a little eminence the scaffold, surrounded by soldiers, broke upon his sight, but it did not cause him even a flutter of fear. His eye roamed over the whole landscape and sky, tracing the dim outline of the Blue Ridge Mountains on the distant horizon, probably thinking of the "everlasting hills" from whence came his strength. "This is a beautiful country," he remarked. "I have not cast my eyes over it before — that is while passing through the field."

"You are more cheerful than I am, Captain Brown," said the undertaker.

"Yes, I ought to be," was his reply.

As the procession entered the field, surprised at the absence of the public, he said,—

"I see no citizens here. Where are they?"

He was told the citizens were advised not to be present.

"That ought not to be," said he; "citizens should be allowed to be present as well as others."

Arriving at the foot of the scaffold, he was assisted out of the waggon, and turning to the mayor and others with whom he had been brought into contact, he said, in a clear, steady voice,—

"Gentlemen, good-bye," and walked with firm step and erect frame up the scaffold steps. Even his implacable enemies, thirsting for his blood, were reluctantly compelled to acknowledge the bravery of their victim. As his elbows and ankles were pinioned he said to Captain Avis,—

"I have no words to thank you for all your kindness to me."

Then the white cap was drawn over his eyes and he was led to the centre of the drop, the rope being adjusted round his neck.

The sheriff asked, "Shall I give you a handkerchief and let you drop it as a signal?"

"No; I am ready at any time, but do not keep me needlessly waiting."

Virginia refused this last request of John Brown. "Not ready yet," cried the commanding officer, and

for ten minutes he was kept in dire suspense, whilst the military — amongst whom was John Wilkes Booth, the murderer of Lincoln — went through a series of aimless evolutions, until the few civilians present began to cry "Shame." Was Virginia trying to torture her victim? What his thoughts were during those awful minutes who shall say? Whatever they were they drew from him no complaint.

Twenty minutes after the trap door fell the doctors declared life to be extinct. The body was placed in the coffin, and still surrounded by soldiers taken back to the gaol. A few hours later it was handed over to Messrs J. Miller M'Kim and Hector Tyndale, as the representatives of Mrs Brown.

The little party travelled by the morning train on Saturday to Philadelphia, intending to remain there until Monday, in order to give Mrs Brown a much-needed rest. But the city was in a state of tumultuous excitement. The mayor met them at the station saying they must go on at once to New York, as he feared the peace would be broken if they remained. So on to New York they proceeded, and with the briefest possible intervals of rest continued their homeward journey amid many manifestations of sympathy and respect, until Wednesday evening, when, after sundown, they approached North Elba. Lanterns were lit, and the whole family was out on the lonely hill-side, in saddest expectation.

At one o'clock on 8th December John Brown was buried in a spot selected by himself, at the foot of a rock about fifteen yards from his door. "Blow ye the trumpet, blow," the hymn with which he had lulled his little ones to sleep, was sung around his grave. Then Wendell Phillips spoke as follows:—

"How feeble words seem here! How can I hope to utter what your hearts are full of? I fear to disturb the harmony which his life breathes round this home. One and another of you, his neighbours, say, 'I have known him five years,' 'I have known him ten years.' It seems to me as if we had none of us known him. How our admiring, loving wonder has grown, day by day, as he has unfolded trait after trait of earnest, brave, tender Christian life! We see him walking with radiant, serene face to the scaffold, and think what an iron heart, what devoted faith! We take up his letters, beginning, 'My dear wife and children, every one'—see him stoop on his way to the scaffold and kiss that negro child—and this iron heart seems all tenderness. Marvellous old man! We have hardly said it when the loved forms of his sons, in the bloom of young devotion, encircle him, and we remember he is not alone; only the majestic centre of a group. Your neighbour farmer went, surrounded by his household, to tell the slaves there were still hearts and right arms ready and nerved for their service. From this roof, four; from a neighbouring one, two; to make up the score of

heroes. And these weeping children and widows seem so lifted up and consecrated by long, single-hearted devotion to his great purpose, that we dare to remind them how blessed they are in the privilege of thinking that in the last throbs of those brave young hearts, which lie buried on the banks of the Shenandoah, thoughts of them mingled with love to God and hope for the slave. *He has abolished slavery in Virginia.* You may say this is too much. Our neighbours are the last men we know. The hours that pass us are the ones we appreciate the least. Men walked Boston streets when night fell on Bunker's Hill, and pitied Warren, saying, 'Foolish man! Thrown away his life! Why didn't he measure his means better?' We see him standing colossal that day on that blood-stained sod, and severing the tie that bound Boston to Great Britain. That night George III. ceased to rule in New England. *History will date Virginian emancipation from Harper's Ferry.* True, the slave is still there. So, when the tempest uproots a pine on our hills, it looks green for months, a year or two. Still, it is timber, not a tree. Thus has John Brown loosened the roots of the slave system.

"Surely such a life is no failure. How vast the change in men's hearts! Insurrection was a harsh, horrid word to millions a month ago. John Brown went a whole generation beyond it, claiming the right for white men to help the slave to freedom by arms. Harper's Ferry was no single hour, standing alone—taken out from a common life; it was the

flowering of fifty years of single-hearted devotion. He must have lived wholly for one great idea, when those who owe their being to him and those whom love has joined group so harmoniously around him, each accepting serenely his and her part. I feel honoured to stand under such a roof. Hereafter you will tell children standing at your knees, 'I saw John Brown buried—I sat under his roof.'

"God make us all worthier of him whose dust we lay among these hills he loved. Here he girded himself and went forth to battle. Fuller success than his heart ever dreamed God has granted him. He sleeps in the blessings of the crushed and the poor, and men believe more firmly in virtue now that such a man has lived."

CHAPTER XV

RESULTS: CONCLUSION

On the day of execution funeral services were held in many Northern towns, the most interesting to the present generation being the one held in Concord, Mass. Alcott in his Diary, under date 2nd December 1859, writes: "Ellen Emerson sends me her fair copy of her Martyr Service. At 2 p.m. we meet at the Town Hall, our own townspeople present mostly, and many from the adjoining towns. Simon Brown is chairman; the readings are by Thoreau, Emerson, C. Bowers, and Alcott; and Sanborn's 'Dirge' is sung by the company standing. The bells are not rung. I think not more than one or two of Brown's friends wished them to be; I did not. It was more fitting to signify our sorrow in the subdued way, and silently, than by any clamour of steeples or the awakening of angry feelings or any conflict, as needless as unamiable, between neighbours. The services are affecting and impressive, distinguished by modesty, simplicity and earnestness — worthy alike of the occasion and of the man."

One thing is abundantly clear. These sympathisers—with rare insight—saw the real signifi-

cance of the events which were passing before them. They had no thought of failure to their enterprise because of Brown's death. As they held their "Martyr Service" in the hall where Brown had twice addressed them, one of their number, the Rev. Edmond Sears, wrote* :—

"Not any spot six feet by two
Will hold a man like thee;
John Brown will tramp the shaking earth
From Blue Ridge to the sea,
Till the strong angel come at last
And opes each dungeon door,
And God's Great Charter holds and waves
O'er all his humble poor.

And then the humble poor will come
In that far-distant day,
And from the felon's nameless grave
They'll brush the leaves away;
And grey old men will point the spot
Beneath the pine-tree shade,
As children ask with streaming eyes
Where Old John Brown is laid."

On the same day, according to Sanborn, Victor Hugo addressed a message to the American people from his retreat in St Peter Port, Guernsey.

"At the thought of the United States of America a majestic form rises in the mind—Washington. In this country of Washington what is now taking place? There are slaves in the South; and this most monstrous of inconsistencies offends the logical conscience of the North. To free these black slaves, John Brown, a white man, a free man, began the work of their deliverance in Virginia. A Puritan

* Quoted by Sanborn.

austerely religious, inspired by the evangel 'Christ hath set us free,' he raised the cry of emancipation. But the slaves, unmanned by servitude, made no response; for slavery stops the ears of the soul. John Brown, thus left alone, began the contest. With a handful of heroic men he kept up the fight; riddled with bullets, his two youngest sons, sacred martyrs, falling at his side, he was at last captured. His trial? It took place, not in Turkey, but in America. Such things are not done with impunity under the eyes of the civilised world. The conscience of mankind is an open eye; let the court at Charlestown understand — Hunter and Parker, the slave-holding jurymen, the whole population of Virginia— that they are watched. This has not been done in a corner. John Brown, condemned to death, is to be hanged to-day. His hangman is not the Attorney Hunter, nor the Judge Parker, nor Governor Wise, nor the little State of Virginia—his hangman (we shudder to think it and say it!) is the whole American Republic. . . . Politically speaking, the murder of Brown will be an irrevocable mistake. It will deal the Union a concealed wound which will finally sunder the States. Let America know and consider that there is one thing more shocking than Cain killing Abel—it is Washington killing Spartacus."

And in March 1860 Hugo wrote further: "Slavery in all its forms will disappear. What the South slew last December was not John Brown, but Slavery. Henceforth, no matter what President

Buchanan may say in his shameful message, the American Union must be considered dissolved. Between the North and the South stands the gallows of Brown. Union is no longer possible; such a crime cannot be shared."

Emerson's views on Brown and his work we have quoted in previous chapters. We may add these additional testimonies from the Sage of Concord and some of his distinguished townsmen.

"He grew up a religious and manly person, in severe poverty; a fair specimen of the best stock of New England, having that force of thought and that sense of right which are the warp and woof of greatness. Our farmers were orthodox Calvinists, mighty in the Scriptures; had learned that life was a preparation, a 'probation,' to use their word, for a higher world, and was to be spent in loving and serving mankind. Thus was formed a romantic character, absolutely without any vulgar trait; living to ideal ends, without any mixture of self-indulgence or compromise, such as lowers the value of benevolent and thoughtful men we know; abstemious, refusing luxuries, not sourly and reproachfully, but simply as unfit for his habit; quiet and gentle as a child in the house. And as happens usually to men of romantic character, his fortunes were romantic. Walter Scott would have been delighted to draw his picture and trace his adventurous career."

Thoreau in his Diaries—1857-59—speaks thus of him:—

"I should say that he is an old-fashioned man in his respect for the Constitution and his faith in the permanence of this Union. Slavery he deems to be wholly opposed to these, and he is its determined foe. He is by descent and birth a New England farmer, a man of great common-sense, deliberate and practical as that class is, and tenfold more so—like the best of those who stood at Concord Bridge once, on Lexington Common, and on Bunker's Hill; only he was firmer and higher-principled than any that I have chanced to hear of as there."

Referring to Brown's repeated successes in Kansas against superior numbers, he says:—

"Yet he did not foolishly attribute his success to his 'star,' or to any magic. He said truly, that the reason why greatly superior numbers quailed before him was, as one of his prisoners confessed, because they 'lacked a cause'—a kind of armour which he and his party never lacked. When the time came few men were found willing to lay down their lives in defence of what they knew to be wrong; they did not like that this should be their last act in this world. . . . A man of rare common-sense and directness of speech as of action, a transcendentalist, above all a man of ideas and principles—that is what distinguishes him. Not yielding to a whim or a transient impulse, but carrying out the purpose of a life."

Alcott's Diaries furnish several interesting glimpses.

"Concord, 8th May 1859. This evening I heard

Captain Brown speak at the Town Hall on Kansas affairs, and the part taken by him in the late troubles there. He tells his story with surpassing simplicity and sense, impressing us all deeply by his courage and religious earnestness. Our best people listen to his words—Emerson, Thoreau, Judge Hoar my wife; and some of them contribute something in aid of his plans without asking particulars, such confidence does he inspire in his integrity and abilities. I have a few words with him after his speech, and find him superior to legal traditions, and a disciple of the Right in ideality and the affairs of state. He is Sanborn's guest and stays for a day only. A young man named Anderson accompanies him. They go armed, I am told, and will defend themselves if necessary. I believe they are now on their way to Connecticut and further south; but the captain leaves us much in the dark concerning his destination and designs for the coming months. Yet he does not conceal his hatred of slavery, nor his readiness to strike a blow for freedom at the proper moment. I infer it is his intention to run off as many slaves as he can, and so render that property insecure to the master. I think him equal to anything he dares—the man to do the deed, if it must be done, and with the martyr's temper and purpose. Nature obviously was deeply intent in the making of him. He is of imposing appearance personally—tall, with square shoulders and standing; eyes of deep grey, and couchant, as if ready to spring at the least

rustling, dauntless yet kindly; his hair shooting backward from low down on his forehead; nose trenchant and Romanesque; set lips, his voice suppressed yet metallic; suggesting deep reserves; decided mouth; the countenance and frame charged with power throughout. Since here last he has added a flowing beard, which gives the soldierly air and the port of an apostle. Though sixty years old, he is agile and alert, and ready for any audacity, in any crisis. I think him about the manliest man I have ever seen—the type and synonym of the Just."

"23rd October. Read with sympathy and a sense of the impossibility of any justice being done him by South or North, by partisans or people—by the general mankind—the newspaper accounts of Captain Brown's endeavour at Harper's Ferry, now coming to us, and exciting politicians and everybody everywhere. This man I heard speak early in the season at our Town Hall, and had the pleasure of grasping his firm hand and of speaking with him after his lecture. This deed of his, so surprising, so mixed, so confounding to most persons, will give an impulse to freedom and humanity, whatever becomes of its victim and of the States that howl over it."

"Sunday, 30th October 1859. Thoreau reads a paper of his on John Brown, his virtues, spirit and deeds, at the vestry this evening, and to the delight

of his company, I am told — the best that could be gathered on short notice, and among them Emerson."

"Friday, 4th November. Thoreau calls and reports about the reading of his lecture on Brown at Boston and Worcester. Thoreau has good right to speak fully his mind concerning Brown, and has been the first to speak and celebrate the hero's courage and magnanimity. It is these which he discerns and praises. The men have much in common — the sturdy manliness, straightforwardness and independence. It is well they met, and that Thoreau saw what he sets forth as none else can. Both are sons of Anak and dwellers in Nature—Brown taking more to the human side, and driving straight at institutions, while Thoreau contents himself with railing at and letting them otherwise alone. He is the proper panegyrist of the virtues he owns himself so largely, and so comprehends in another."

H. A. Page in his *Thoreau: His Life and Aims* * tells us that Thoreau had a strong dislike of platforms and all appearances in public, but Brown's attempt carried him out of his habitual reserve. He had little sympathy with his hero's Calvinistic Puritanism, but his soul glowed with admiration for his "great deed." It is curious to read that he—the shy, retiring man — personally sent out notices to the houses of his fellow townsmen that he would address them on the subject of

* Pp. 117-121.

John Brown on the Sunday evening. The Republican Committee and the Abolition Committee of the little town wrote to him to say that his action was premature and ill-advised. He replied: "I did not send to you for advice, but to announce to you that I am to speak." The Town Hall was "filled at an early hour by people of all parties." One passage from his address may be quoted.

"I am here to plead his cause with you. I plead not for his life, but his character—his immortal life; and so it becomes your cause wholly, and not his in the least. . . . I see now that it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in the country should be hung. Perhaps he saw it himself. *I almost fear* that I may yet hear of his deliverance, doubting if a prolonged life, if any life, can do as much good as his death." A local chronicler says: "His earnest eulogy of the hero was heard by all respectfully, by many with a sympathy that surprised themselves."

How profoundly this absorbed student of nature was moved is shown by the fact that he could write like this seven months after Brown's death: "For my own part, I commonly attend more to nature than to man, but any affecting human event may blind our eyes to natural objects. I was so absorbed in him as to be surprised whenever I detected the routine of the natural world surviving still, or met persons going about their affairs indifferent. It appeared strange to me that the 'little dipper' should be still diving quietly in the

river as of yore; and it suggested that this bird might continue to dive here when Concord should be no more.

"I felt that he, a prisoner in the midst of his enemies, and under sentence of death, if consulted as to his next step or resource, could answer more wisely than all his countrymen beside. He best understood his position; he contemplated it most calmly. Comparatively, all other men, North and South, were beside themselves. Our thoughts could not revert to any greater, or wiser, or better man with whom to contrast him, for he, then and there, was above them all. The man this country was about to hang appeared the greatest and best in it. . . . Nothing could his enemies do but it redounded to his infinite advantage, that is, to the advantage of his cause. They did not hang him at once but reserved him to preach to them. They did not hang his four (six) followers with him; that scene was still postponed; and so his victory was prolonged and completed. . . .

"On the day of his translation I heard, to be sure, that he was *hung*, but I did not know what that meant; I felt no sorrow on that account; but not for a day or two did I even *hear* that he was *dead*, and not after any number of days shall I believe it. Of all the men who were said to be my contemporaries, it seemed to me that John Brown was the only one who *had not died*. . . . I meet him at every turn. He is more alive than he ever was. He has earned immortality. He is

not confined to North Elba nor to Kansas. He is no longer working in secret. He works in public in the clearest light that shines in the land."

It must ever be regarded as one of "life's little ironies" that Thoreau should not have lived to see the success of the cause so dear to his heart. He died in May 1862, in his forty-fifth year.

We add a few more specimens of contemporary opinion. The Rev. Dr George B. Cheever, in a sermon entitled "The Martyr's Death and the Martyr's Triumph," delivered on 4th December 1859, said: "This self-sacrifice of John Brown was for a despised and hated race, condemned to perpetual slavery. It is a sublime and solitary instance in all modern history. A man in his senses, in an age of prudential wisdom worshipped as religion —in an age of self-interest and expediency—when the world is full of priests and Levites, ecclesiastical, political, social, passing by on the other side—offers himself in the service of a despised, rejected, down-trodden caste, pursues his purpose for twenty years, watches for opportunities to strike some mighty blow of deliverance, and at length, thinking that God had given him the hour, goes forth to suffer unto death for slaves — for negroes. Now, I say that, under such circumstances, John Brown has all the characteristics of a martyr, and his death is a martyr's death. . . . Doubtless the death of John Brown is the beginning of the end."

Writing in the *Liberator*, Lloyd Garrison said: "If he shall be (as he will speedily beyond a peradventure) put to death, he will not die ignobly, but as a martyr to his sympathy with a suffering race, and in defence of the sacred and unalienable rights of man, and will, therefore, deserve to be held in grateful and honourable remembrance to the latest posterity, by all those who glory in the deeds of a Wallace or Tell, a Washington or Warren. . . . It will be a terrible losing day for all slavedom when John Brown and his associates are brought to the gallows. It will be sowing seed broadcast for a harvest of retribution. Their blood will cry trumpet-tongued from the ground, and that cry will be responded to by tens of thousands in a manner that shall cause the knees of the Southern slave-mongers to smite together, as did those of Belshazzar of old."

Theodore Parker, a member of the small committee which knew much—though not the whole—of Brown's plans,* was travelling in Europe in the ineffectual search for health at the time of the raid. He was watching events with the keenest interest, and two of the last letters he wrote show that he, in common with many of his anti-slavery friends, grasped the trend of events. Writing from Rome, under date 24th November 1859, to his friend Francis Jackson of Boston, he said: "Captain Brown's

* The other members were, Gerrit Smith, G. L. Stearns, Dr Howe, T. W. Higginson, and F. B. Sanborn.

expedition was a failure, I hear it said. I am not quite sure of that. True, it kills fifteen men by sword and shot, and four or five men by the gallows. But it shows the weakness of the greatest Slave State in America, the worthlessness of her soldiery, and the utter fear which slavery genders in the bosoms of the masters.

"Brown will die, I think, like a martyr, and also like a saint. His noble demeanour, his unflinching bravery, his gentleness, his calm, religious trust in God, and his words of truth and soberness cannot fail to make a profound impression on the hearts of Northern men; yes, and on Southern men. 'For every heart is human,' etc. I do not think the money wasted nor the lives thrown away. Many acorns must be sown to have one come up; even then, the plant grows slow; but it is an oak at last. None of the Christian martyrs died in vain; and from Stephen, who was stoned at Jerusalem, to Mary Dyer, whom our fathers hanged on a bough of 'the great tree' on Boston Common, I think there have been few spirits more pure and devoted than John Brown's, and none gave up their breath in a nobler cause."

And to Emerson on 9th December he said: "Had I been at home, sound and well, I think this occasion would have either sent me out of the country—as it has Dr Howe—or else have put me in a tight place. Surely I could not have been quite unconcerned and safe."

But he was far from "sound and well," and, like Thoreau, died before victory came.

In explanation of the reference to Dr Howe in the last extract it may be stated that Brown's capture and the seizure of his papers caused considerable anxiety among the members of the secret committee previously mentioned. Dr Howe withdrew into Canada, dreading arrest. The remainder of the committee went quietly about their usual duties after destroying such letters as would implicate them or others, except Gerrit Smith, who was thrown into a serious illness by his anxiety. Although diligent search was made, no evidence was found making them responsible for Brown's attempt.

One of the most lucid and calmly-reasoned reviews of the situation appeared in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*—a paper which had James Russell Lowell on its editiorial staff in the earlier years of its history —from the pen of Oliver Johnson, its editor, the friend and biographer of Garrison. This paper was the organ of the American Anti-Slavery Society, the moral suasion party. The following are some of the more striking passages.

" For ourselves, differing as we do from these brave men as to the wisdom of their enterprise, and regretting deeply its bloody termination, we cannot withhold our admiration from the self-devotion and constancy with which they faced and met their death in a great and unselfish, however mistaken, attempt for the liberty of the oppressed race. As a display of personal courage and resolute opposition to deadly odds, we know of nothing in the annals of heroism that excels it. In this age of compromise and

cowardice, of calculators and economists, it is an encouragement to know that there could be found twenty men ready to dash themselves against the wall of our bastille as the forlorn hope of what they believed to be the army of liberation. We think better of the country and the race because of them.

"The point of view in which John Brown's movement may most appropriately be called a success is the absolute compulsion it has laid upon all sections of the country to think, speak and act in relation to slavery. We, the Abolitionists, have for twenty-eight years been seeking the peaceful Abolition of this system of unspeakable wickedness. Believing that if the people of this country would look fairly at the enormities which are inseparable from its character, they would see that duty and interest combine to require its immediate and unconditional Abolition, we have sought to call their attention to the facts in question. But they would not hear. As far as strenuous and vigilant efforts would avail, the clergy shut the subject out of their pulpits, the clerical editors out of their newspapers, the deacons out of their prayer meetings, the political editors out of their party 'organs,' the church committees out of their meeting-houses, and the people at large out of their mouths and minds. They found the subject of slavery a bore. Like the members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, on the presentation of Dr Cheever's memorial against the slave trade, they asked, both in speech and equally unequivocal action: 'Why are we to be teased with

this everlasting fuss about niggers?' Our constant effort to make all these classes attend to the subject of slavery, discuss it and act upon it—however successful, considering the obstacles—advanced but by slow degrees towards absolute success. John Brown in two days, by his different method, has irresistibly compelled all these people to do what we have been trying all these years to persuade them to do. Is not this success? . . .

"That desperate night and day at Harper's Ferry, and the chain of events which has depended therefrom, has put forward the hands on the dial-plate of our national destiny many years, which are moments of History. It has done more to develop the state of feeling in regard to slavery and its issues, both at the North and the South, than anything that has gone before it. At the North, the all but unanimous sympathy which has been felt and uttered for the fate, if not for the deed, of John Brown shows how much the old pro-slavery glamour has been dispelled that formerly darkened men's eyes. An assault on the legalised property of a Southern State in which lives were lost was not a thing likely at first sight to awaken the sympathy and admiration of the hard-working and calm-thinking North. It was because the true nature of that pretended property and the mischiefs flowing from its permissive existence were understood and appreciated, as never before, that John Brown stood up before the masses of the North as a hero instead of a felon, and his act looked to them like a virtue instead of a crime.

"All the history of the country for the last thirty years had been conducting the general mind up to this plane of opinion and feeling. Five-and-twenty years ago such an act as Brown's had been impossible, and such a state of sentiment concerning it an absurd supposition. Texas and Mexico, the War of the Right of Petition, the Compromise Measures, the Repeal of the Missouri Compromise, the Kansas War, the attempted assassination of Sumner, the proposed re-opening of the Slave Trade, had all been teaching great lessons to the people of the North. Slavery would not suffer the North to forget her existence or to shut its heavy eyes to her forward footsteps. The Northern people were forced to see, whether they liked it or not, that their liberties were inextricably entangled with the fetters of the slave, and that the one could not be secure until the other had been broken. And so when an earnest hand struck a blow for the deliverance of the slaves, that blow, though baffled, awakened a thrill and an echo in thousands of Northern hearts.

"And while these passions have been developed at the North, antagonistic passions have blazed up in the South with a fury never yet seen in action. Never before was the South — meaning thereby the controlling slave-holding element of the slave-holders which holds all else in check—in so frantic a state of excitement as at present. It is an excitement of mingled terror and hatred — fear of all the blacks at the South and hatred of the

whites at the North. Their whole course is one tending yet more to alienate the North, and to make its inhabitants feel that there is not much Union left to save or dissolve."

Before the execution, E. C. Stedman in his poem, "John Brown of Ossawattomie," had made a direct appeal to the Virginians to exercise mercy in their own interests, as the violent death of their prisoner would be sure to cry aloud for vengeance.

"But, Virginians, don't do it! for I tell you that the flagon,
Filled with blood of Old Brown's offspring, was first poured by Southern hands;
And each drop from Old Brown's life-veins, like the red gore of the dragon,
May spring up a vengeful Fury, hissing through your slave-worn lands!
And Old Brown,
Ossawattomie Brown,
May trouble you more than ever when you've nailed his coffin down!"

These extracts show that many earnest, thoughtful men believed that now was the beginning of the end. As in very deed it was. Brown's death —putting the crown to the noble work of the Abolitionists — made Lincoln's election certain. Lincoln's election caused the Southerners to vote themselves out of the Union. "Father Abraham" called up his volunteers, saved the Union, and abolished slavery. And as the sturdy Northerners marched to victory through long years of bloody warfare, it was with John Brown's name on their lips, and his spirit in their hearts.

"John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave,
But his soul is marching on."

To complete the story of his comrades and family.

Six of Brown's followers remained in the hands of the Virginians, viz., Cook, Coppock, Copeland, Green, Stevens and Hazlett. Urged by his relatives, Cook had written a confession in the hope of escaping the extreme penalty, but without avail. His friends continued to use every endeavour to save him, even to the extent of preparing plans of escape; which failed, although both Cook and Coppock got as far as the top of the outer wall of the prison. Had they arrived there the night previous, when a friendly sentry was on guard, they would in all probability have succeeded in their attempt. On 16th December Copeland, Green, Cook and Coppock were executed, but it was not until March 1860 that Stevens and Hazlett paid the penalty.

Of John Brown's household but little remains to be told. Four children of his first family survived him, and of these Hinton in 1894 gave the following particulars.

John Brown, junr., was then, at the age of seventy-three, living on the shores of Lake Erie. He was a captain in the Northern Army during the Civil War. Jason, aged seventy-one, was living in California. Owen, who escaped from Harper's Ferry, died in California in 1890, in his sixty-sixth

year. Ruth was residing in California with her husband, Henry Thompson.

Of the second family, Salmon was living in Washington, having been a lieutenant in the Northern Army during the war. Annie — Mrs Adams—Sarah, unmarried, and Ellen—Mrs Fabinger —were all living happily in California.

It was in 1863 that, accompanied by her son Salmon and her daughters, Mrs Brown removed to California. Here she remained until 1882, when she was at last able to gratify a deeply-cherished wish to visit North Elba once more, and for the first time to look on the scenes of her husband's sufferings and labours in Kansas. Public receptions were given her in Chicago, Boston, Springfield, and Topeka, the capital of Kansas. She was further gratified by the recovery of Watson's remains, which were placed by the side of his father's on the bleak Adirondack hillside. It was the last effort of a life rich in self-sacrifice. She did not survive her return many months.

Mary Ann Brown is worthy of remembrance with her husband. Taking charge of his five children in 1832 when only in her eighteenth year, she devoted herself to his interests and work, and conscientiously discharged every duty devolving upon her. For long months in succession she bore absence from her husband and sons, toiling with her daughters to cultivate the farm, because she believed her husband was serving God by working for the slaves. A sincere Christian, a daily reader

of the Bible, she entered fully into his crusade, and believed he had a God-appointed mission. It was a life which but few could have lived. Unrelieved by any seasons of excitement, public applause, or sense of victory won, it was one prolonged endurance and quiet resignation, ending at last in the supreme agony of Harper's Ferry. Surely, wherever John Brown's story is told, this ought always to be said of Mary Brown, "She hath done what she could."

THE END

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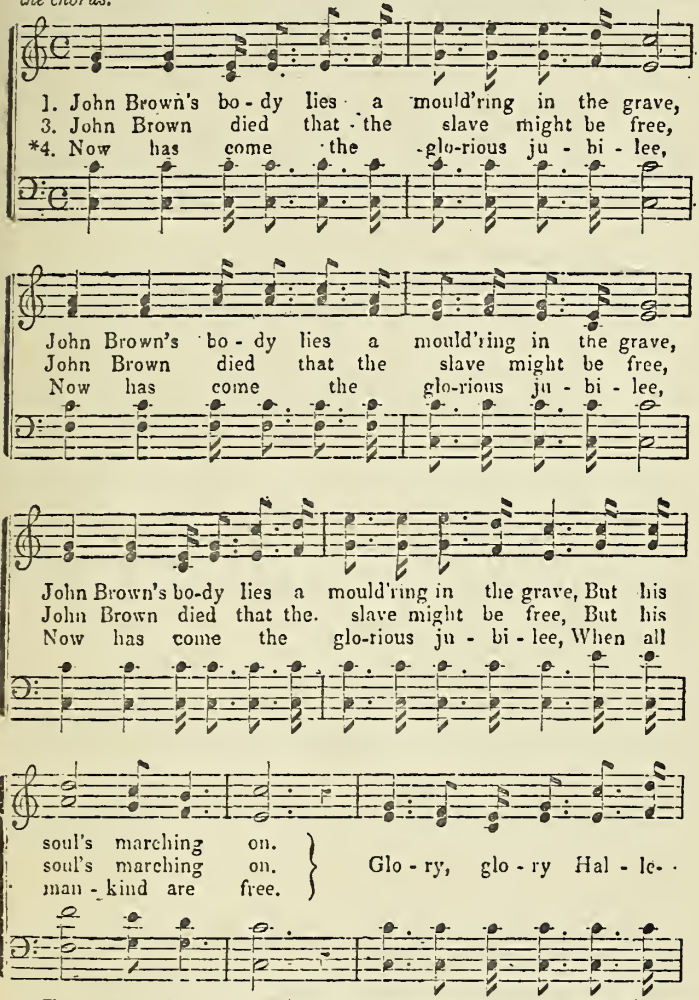
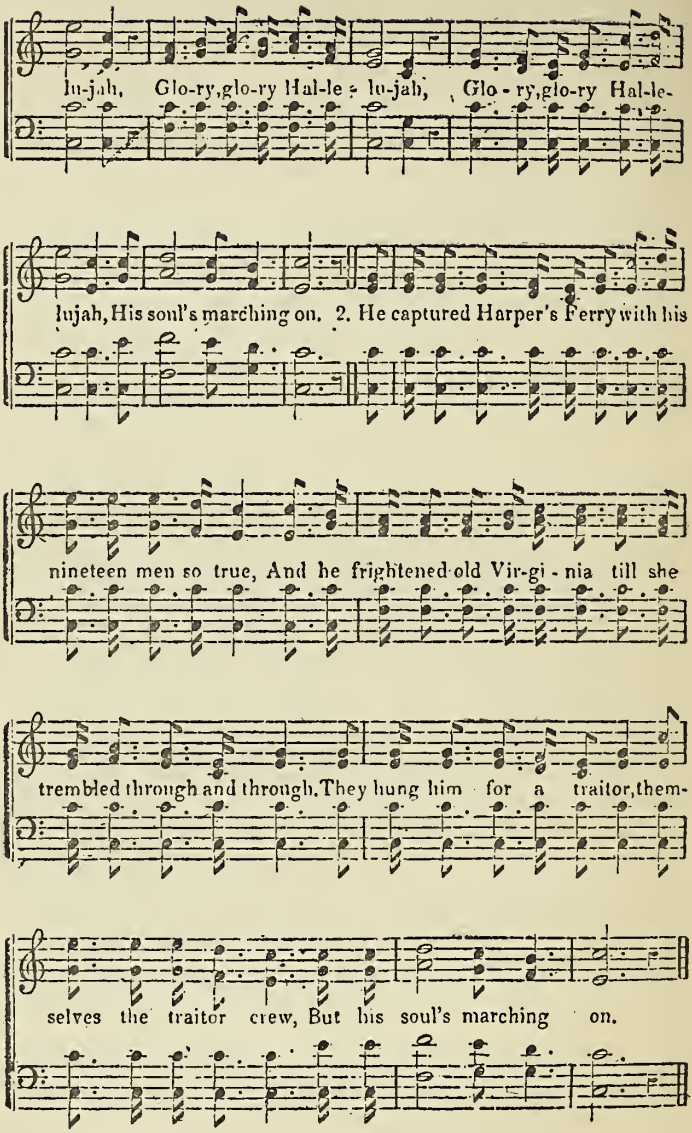
John Brown's Body.

Sing the verses in the order in which they are numbered. Do not sing the chorus after the third verse, but go at once to the fourth, and then close with the chorus.


1. John Brown's bo - dy lies a mould'ring in the grave,
3. John Brown died that the slave might be free,
*4. Now has come the glo-rious ju - bi - lee,
John Brown's bo - dy lies a mould'ring in the grave,
John Brown died that the slave might be free,
Now has come the glo-rious ju - bi - lee,
John Brown's bo-dy lies a mould'ring in the grave, But his
John Brown died that the. slave might be free, But his
Now has come the glo-rious ju - bi - lee, When all
soul's marching on.
soul's marching on.
man - kind are free.
Glo - ry, glo - ry Hal - le-

* The words of the fourth verse do not correspond fully to the notes, but the adaptation can be easily made by the singer.

lu-jah, Glo-ry, glo-ry Hal-le - lu-jah, Glo - ry, glo-ry Hal-le-
lujah, His soul's marching on. 2. He captured Harper's Ferry with his
nineteen men so true, And he frightened old Vir-gi - nia till she
trembled through and through. They hung him for a traitor, them-
selves the traitor crew, But his soul's marching on.

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